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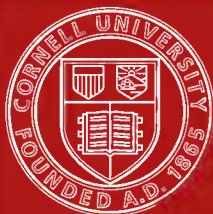
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Amesbury, Mass.

John Lubbock
Antiquary and Naturalist

By the Rev. John Lubbock, M.A., of the University of Cambridge, and Hon. Sec. of the British Museum.

SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM

A BIOGRAPHY

BY

T. EDGAR PEMBERTON

AUTHOR OF "A MEMOIR OF E. A. SOTHERN,"
"THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF T. W. ROBERTSON,"
"JOHN HARE, COMEDIAN," "THE KENDALS,"
"ELLEN TERRY AND HER SISTERS,"
"THE LIFE OF BRET HARTE," ETC. ETC.

WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS
INCLUDING A PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE

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TO
MY FRIEND
MISS MARY MOORE
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED
AS A SLIGHT TOKEN
OF SINCERE
REGARD

PREFACE

ODDLY enough the greatest obstacle to the writing of this brief and happily unfinished biography has been its subject. Sir Charles Wyndham has more than once been asked to write his autobiography, but he has declined because, in the first place, he has a great horror of anything that suggests to him self-advertisement, and, in the second place, because he believes that an account of his career would prove uninteresting to the reader. In short, he holds that the life of an actor *qua* actor is unattractive, and would say with David Garrick—

“The painter dead, yet still he charms the eye ;
While England lives his name can never die.
But he who struts his hour upon the stage
Can scarce extend his fame for half an age ;
Nor pen nor pencil can the actor save ;
The art and artist share one common grave.”

I hope that in the pages of this permitted biography I shall persuade my old friend to believe that all this is not true ; that there are thousands upon thousands who are grateful to those who have instructed and amused us on the stage, and thousands and thousands who will come after us who, following in the footsteps of their forefathers, will not let their honoured memories die.

T. EDGAR PEMBERTON.

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A BIOGRAPHY OF SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM

CHAPTER I THE OVERTURE

SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM was born at Liverpool on March 23rd, 1837. His father was a doctor, and from the very first made up his mind that his son should follow the profession in which he had prospered. The son has since declared that he fell in love with the stage at a very early age, and used to revel in acting to himself before a looking-glass, his favourite rôle being Othello, in which, in the absence of accessories of "make-up," he used to wait till he could get his face dirty before he enacted the dusky hero. When ten years old he was sent to school at Sandgate, and, after two years' preparatory work there, was promoted to St. Andrews. Here his theatrical tastes were fostered, for Major Playfair—the grandfather of Arthur Playfair, the well-known comedian of to-day—had a private theatre in his house and used to invite the boys to

witness his productions. This induced the youthful Charles to write marvellous melodramas, which, at forbidden hours, he and the companions of his dormitory used to act while candles lasted. Fortunately, or unfortunately, these proceedings became known to the authorities, and the juvenile but stage-struck ringleader was publicly reprimanded for attempts to mar the morals of his schoolfellows. From St. Andrews this dangerous young reprobate was sent to Germany, and there he studied well at Norwied and Bonn.

At Norwied he underwent what he called a “dreamy” experience—not an uncommon thing with imaginative boys—and became a religious enthusiast. This is his brief narrative of what happened :—

“Whilst I used to play with my companions I was always much impressed by a long-legged, lanky-looking fellow, with straight, long hair and long, ascetic face, who used to walk up and down the playground with his eyes on his boots, murmuring ever to himself. I got fascinated by him, approached him and made his acquaintance, and found he belonged to a well-known Wesleyan family, and we organised a Church to reform the boys. The masters lent us a room, and starting with half a dozen enthusiasts, we ultimately collected twenty-five well-meaning lads into our fold. When my Wesleyan friend left I became head of the Church. In the school was the son of a celebrated divine in London, whom we shall call S——, a wild scapegrace, whose language was more ornate than pious. One day he asked me to let him join the Church. I hesitated. I told him I’d take a fortnight to decide. Meanwhile he



By permission of Sir George Newnes

SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AT THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN
FROM A MINIATURE

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could join us as a probationary spirit. I was afraid, in fact, that his conversion was too sudden, and he obtained this concession from us because he said he was sure his joining us would please his father. The next Sunday S—— was present at our gathering. It was my turn to preach, and I chose the text, ‘Almost am I persuaded to be a Christian.’ My sermon was, of course, directed to him. After the service was all over he thanked me, said he understood and appreciated my reference to him, both in text and sermon, and that his father would be so pleased to hear I had prayed for him. He further assured me he was a changed boy. I was delighted. He grasped me by the hand and said he should like to preach on the following Sunday! I assured him that only elders, the four or five first-comers, could preach, and that he would have to wait till he was ordained. He thought that on account of his parentage an exception ought to be made in his case. I could not hear of it. ‘Won’t you let me preach?’ ‘No, it is against the rules of our Church.’ ‘Do you mean it?’ he asked. ‘I do.’ ‘Then go to ——!’ and he sent me to the very place I was trying to save him from!”

It was this Church episode that probably gave colour to the rumour repeatedly circulated, that Charles Wyndham was originally intended for the ministry of the Church of England.

“I was suddenly called away from Germany. I rather suspect because I was always writing to my parents exhorting them to repent before they got burnt. It was probably feared that if I remained and developed more of this fervour of hysterical religion, they might

get too much of a good thing on my return, to say nothing of the parental hopes of my following a medical career being shattered. So as a kind of corrective I was sent to Paris to learn French and forget Wesleyism." There he was occasionally able to indulge his taste for the theatre. He laughingly recalls one night when, on the Imperial August fête, he went to the theatre, and on his return found himself locked out of his school, and wandered about the boulevards until six o'clock in the morning, with only a sou in his pocket, which he hazarded on a gingerbread roulette, and won the largest piece, which sustained him on the Champs Elysées until the hour, when he managed to get into the house. Stealthily ascending the staircase that led to his bedroom, he encountered the head-master, who, in blissful ignorance of his escapade, condemned him for getting up before the bell rang, and ordered him to bed till he was sent for—a consummation most devoutly wished by him!

From Paris he went to King's College, London, and then his medical studies (leavened, no doubt, with a certain amount of theatre-going) commenced in good earnest. These were completed at the College of Surgeons and the Peter Street Anatomical School, Dublin. In London he triumphantly passed his examinations and gained his diplomas.

But the undying love of his art held him fast, and he managed to do a little amateur acting. This was at the tiny playhouse that then existed near to King's Cross, which was known as the Cabinet Theatre. Here would-be comedians and tragedians were wont to disport

themselves, paying for the privilege of treading the boards. The principle is a bad one, but the little establishment witnessed the tentative efforts of many good actors. For instance, Henry Kemble, the grandson of Charles Kemble, and the popular actor of to-day, recalls playing the First Gravedigger in *Hamlet* at the Cabinet, and paying six shillings and sixpence for the privilege. It was here that Charles Wyndham first met William Blakeley, the delightfully quaint comedian with whom he was destined to do so much good work at the Criterion Theatre. But Wyndham's early ambition was to play tragedy. He had been deeply impressed by the leading Shakespearean performers of those days, and longed to appear as Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, and Richard III. Happily for the public he ultimately changed his views.

Some of his recent impersonations have indicated that there is no reason why his first wishes should not have been fulfilled, but whereas a score of actors may give a good account of themselves in serious parts, those who can be really perfect in light comedy are few and far between. How rarely we meet with a Charles Mathews, or an Edward Askew Sothorn! The last-named actor was wont to say, and no doubt he was right, that to act touch-and-go farce in a way that will absolutely convince an audience is far more difficult than to impress them with tragedy. Charles Wyndham, on the other hand, enjoins all would-be actors to begin in burlesque to learn rudimentary tragedy. He holds it the best school for all serious acting. Some highly gifted artists can be both serious and funny; witness

Henry Irving, whose Jingle and Jeremy Diddler are as fascinating as his Mathias and Louis XI. Charles Wyndham has given ample proof that he can strike the two notes, but his audiences were for many years unable to spare him from parts in which, possibly against his will, he has for a long period had no rival. In common with the David Garrick he impersonates so well, he has added to the gaiety of nations.

It will be understood that this early flirtation with the alluring footlights of the Cabinet Theatre did not tend to diminish his strong desire to abandon medicine and surgery and devote himself to the art of acting, veritably the Cinderella of the arts in the days of which I am writing. He had, however, made a compact with his father that if he gained his diplomas he was to be at liberty to do as he pleased. Like most parents of that period, the father had a strong dislike for the stage as a profession, and greatly deplored his son's desire in that direction. Possibly his arguments had some effect, for in later years Charles Wyndham said—"I went on the stage only because I felt I could not settle down to any other career. The drama had entranced me. I fought against it. I tried to resist my dramatic impulses. In the old days, when I was a medical student at King's College, I took some part in various plays, but then the stage was much less attractive than it is now. The actor had always to pose as the humble obedient servant of the public, grateful to it for any favours it might condescend to bestow upon him. He had to put his hand next his heart, and bow and meekly thank it for all patronage it might give him. I did not like this.

And it proved a rather strong deterrent to my ambition for a time, so I went out to America and through the Civil War, determined to shake off my love of the stage."

How differently would the father have thought if he could have foreseen that his apparently foolish, stage-struck boy possessed the rare gift of a histrionic genius that was to make him one of the greatest actors of an era in which the stage has taken its proper place in the world of art, and for that very reason was selected as a well-graced and universally honoured recipient of the accolade!

There were several reasons why Charles Wyndham went to America. He wanted to escape from the temptations of the English theatres; he felt that he could not settle down to the prosaic life of a family practitioner; he had a restless desire for adventure; and he was determined to earn his own living.

Thus it came about that in 1862—and after some fugitive appearances at the Royalty Theatre (where he met Miss Ellen Terry, then standing on the brink of her brilliant career), in such pieces as *The Serious Family*, and the old version of *A Scrap of Paper*—he found himself in New York, at the time when the terrible struggle between the Northern and Southern States was raging. Of this very interesting incident in his career I can speak in his own words.

"I was bound for America, the land of freedom, where equality was adored, favouritism abhorred, and red tape abominated. I was going to New York in quest of an army appointment as medical officer, eager

for adventure, proud of my resolve, and strengthened by the certainty of its easy accomplishment. Success, in fact, appeared so certain from all I had heard of the country, that I was convinced that on my arrival there I had only to hold up my little finger and every State in the Union would rush at me with a commission. Any doubt in the premises was too absurd for consideration. Proffered letters of introduction were scornfully rejected. I was going across, not for pleasure, but for work. Why waste one single precious hour in polite triviality? Why should my mind be disturbed by social temptations? The army was pining for its surgeon, and its surgeon was pining for the army. Letters to influential magnates in Washington, amongst them one to the Commander-in-Chief of the Department, General Banks, were sacrificed to the tempestuous ardour that would brook no obstacle nor permit delay until the first step was taken towards the goal.

“The first step was necessarily from *terra firma* to the deck of a ship, and ever since marine heroes have held an exalted eminence in my mind. The first few Atlantic rollers played havoc with all my plans. My valuable resolutions paled before inexorable Neptune and a basin, and in the lulls of exhausted nature I began to ask myself for the first time what form my action would take on landing. Not only was this the initial step towards the goal, but it was the critical step from the parental roof, undertaken in blind defiance to the pronounced opinion of the family authorities in solemn conclave assembled, and enforced by the very practical refusal to vote any supplies to the enterprise. They decided that

if I really was going to carve out my own fortune, the best thing for me to do was to supply my own knife. In other words, I had to rely on my unaided efforts, and after paying for my passage in the intermediate cabin, I began life in the land of freedom with forty-five dollars in my pocket, no acquaintance and no letters to assist me; nothing but the knowledge which I had picked up promiscuously on board to guide me in shaping my course. According to this valuable information, but two roads lay open to me: one led to a recruiting office in New York, the other to the most fashionable hotel in Washington. 'In America, go to the best, and to the very best,' my adviser said. 'Expensive,' he warned me, 'but wise'—I should then meet everybody. With forty-five dollars in my pocket the first of these plans appealed the more strongly to my consideration. My first days should be devoted to an attempt in New York. An hour after landing found me in a recruiting office on Broadway, where the officers were like trawlers with their nets, catching by any means all the fish they could get.

"'Do you want a surgeon?' I asked, much as a dog-fancier might have asked, 'Do you want a dog?'

"I was at once the centre of an eager-looking crowd of officials. 'Did I really want to go into the army?' 'How old was I?' 'How long had I been in the country?' 'Had I any friends here?' Nothing more pertinent to the special nature of my question until one queried, 'Could I mend arms?' Here at last was something practical, though perhaps a little quaint in phraseology. 'Could I mend arms?' This, of course,

was the dry American humour of which I had heard so much in England. The comprehensive brevity of it! Instead of 'Can you reduce a dislocation?' 'Can you treat a fracture or amputate a limb?' simply, 'Can you mend arms?' Of course I could, and, anxious to attain to their humorous level, replied, 'Any amount of them, bring them along as fast as you like.' My answer evidently impressed them, for I was told 'they guessed I would do.'

"Do you want to see my diplomas?' I inquired.

"Oh no, we'll take your word for it.' Another trait of American character. The mere possession of a diploma doesn't prove the possession of ability. Of course not. If you can mend arms, what does it matter about the piece of parchment that says you may? At all events, in this short dialogue I had so far advanced in my arrangements that, as soon as I stood once more on Broadway, I felt myself every inch an American. But two hours on land, and I had been all but appointed to an important post! Where was the sage wisdom of family counsel now? Should I hurry back to my hotel and read up for the coming "exam," or should I enjoy a little relaxation, break into my forty-five dollars, and go to a theatre? I determined on the gallery of the latter.

"That was the time when visitors would always be recommended to visit Wallack's Theatre, and Wallack's only; so later on I found myself in that well-known Temple of Art, sitting for the first time—though up in the gallery—at the feet of that prince of light comedians, Lester Wallack. He was playing Charles Surface, but

with all the dazzling abandon of a white Court wig, heavy black moustache, and black mutton-chop whiskers. Another insight into the charming freedom of American customs. Why should actors any more than other people be tied down to the conventional if they didn't like the conventional? Lester Wallack in New York could do no wrong. He chose to retain his moustache and whiskers, and there was no one to say him nay. It was all of a piece. I was in a whirl of delight; everything was new; old-fashioned customs of the effete old country were left dragging behind, and the honour of my coming triumph was before me. I went to bed in a waking dream of future glory. I woke in the morning already flushed with conquest.

"To the minute I was at the bureau. The stern formalities of an examination were already known to me, but one day's existence in the new land of freedom had taught me to expect a little less solemnity in the ordeal. Still, even I was a little shocked at the rough-and-ready procedure. From the general offices I was pushed into another room, perfectly empty and not particularly clean, but with the information that here I was to be examined. My doubt was but momentary: the buoyant faith of youth revealed to me again in this instance the great simplicity of the American nature, ever dispensing with even a semblance of ostentation, however momentous the occasion. This comforting reflection over, the doctor entered.

"'What will be his first question?' I ought to have stayed at home and crammed last night, little dreaming that, in another sense, I had been cramming all the

evening in that gallery. I eyed him nervously as he surveyed me with a sort of careless curiosity. I hung upon his lips with painful waiting for the dreadful question.

“‘Strip!’ was the solitary word that came from the arbiter of my fate. I was a little taken aback, but complied and submitted to an examination, the value of which I was quite willing to recognise, in view of my coming arduous duties on the field, but which still was hardly the one I had been bristling for. The instruction complied with, I waited for the next. Shall I be sent up to Albany for my real examination? I began to think; and if so, who is going to pay the expenses? For even with my youthful experience and enthusiasm for everything American, I began to see that forty-five dollars would not go far, even in a land of freedom. I was interrupted in my reverie by a remark of the doctor’s that gave me great pleasure.

“‘You are going to do well here.’ ‘Really?’ ‘Yes, the Colonel has taken a great fancy to you; you’ll be promoted in no time.’

“Delighted, I returned to the bureau.

“‘Well, it’s all right,’ said the chief recruiting officer to me. ‘You are passed.’

“‘What do you mean? Don’t you want to examine me?’ I asked.

“‘You’ve been examined once, what more do you want? And, by-the-by, the Colonel’s taken a great fancy to you. You’re just the sort of young stuff he likes to have about him. He was saying yesterday, you’ll soon go up. Here’s your papers; come and sign them.’

“‘Is this for the post of surgeon?’ I inquired.

“‘Certainly.’

“‘And you want to know no more about me?’

“‘No, we know a fellow when we see him; and I just tell you, you’re going up; the Colonel’s wonderfully taken with you. Sign your name; the regiment starts in a day or two. Hurry up! We’ve a lot to do. You’re just in luck’s way, you are. There’s the place; sign there.’

“Stupefied with astonishment, I once more took up the pen and was about to sign, when an idea flashed into my mind, and I said, ‘It’s for the doctor of the regiment, eh?’

“‘Doctor be d——d! It’s for the sergeant’ (often pronounced over there ‘sergent’).

“Here I instinctively acquired my first valuable lesson in elocution, ‘Take care of the consonants.’ The unsophisticated recruiting officer, in speaking of my appointment, had slurred over the final ‘t’ in ‘sergeant,’ and not till I had pinned him down did that consonant come out as consonants always should, and I came out too.

“All my castles had fallen down about my ears. Chop-fallen, but not defeated, I packed for Washington.

“The next morning found me there, and once more, with all my hopes renewed, my ambitions widened. I was in the ‘City of Magnificent Distances,’ as they called Washington; in the famous, handsome Pennsylvania Avenue, with its dazzling white Treasury building closing up the one end, and its dazzling white Capitol closing up the other, in the very midst of the excitement

and stir of military life; troops hurrying from the railway station through the city to the landing-stage and the boats to take them to the front; gun-carriages lumbering along, staff officers galloping eagerly up and down on their various errands, and uniforms on the pavements as thick as flies, a bewildering mass of colour and movement, with the beautiful Potomac River with its long bridge, ever crowded, leading to an amphitheatre of hills, green with the growth of verdure, and coronated by the historic, handsome white mansion, a residence of the Confederate General Lee, and above all the deep blue cloudless sky and the sun shining down his glory on the scene. What a vision for the young stranger in the gates, with brain in delirium and heart beating with exaltation! The swagger hotel I was, as per advice, staying in—oh, my thirty-five dollars!—was so full of Generals I could afford to turn up my nose at Colonels, whilst to Majors I wouldn't have given a nod. Already I was debating which tailor I should patronise, and nothing but the fact that my thirty-five dollars wouldn't be long even thirty-five prevented my using the few hours of liberty still left to me and ordering my uniform in advance. I felt myself already in the army, unattached of course; in fact, the regiment I should join would be very much a matter of my own choice. Every General I saw I buttonholed, asking his advice, if not his interest. The discovery that every General courteously regretted his inability to further my views did not discourage me. It was only as my stock of Generals grew exhausted that my courage began to waver; numerous as they were, two days had used most

of them up, and like a Londoner who knocks two or three times at the same door in a fog, I found myself frequently tapping the same General. In sheer defence I had to fall back on the Colonels. Alas ! with the same result ! I discovered there was somehow an inexplicable indifference on the part of both divisional and regimental commanders to avail themselves of my valuable services, and all asked for my letters of introduction. Applications in the legitimate channels were fruitless too. In those early days commissions seemed to go as much by political favour as by merit, and 'no stranger need apply.'

"Undismayed at the barren result of my efforts, I suddenly resolved on courting the mysterious influence of Chance. Into her hands I was young enough blindly to commit myself. Chance came to my assistance, but in her own way, not mine. In those days each American hotel had a public room, open as much to non-residents as to residents. It contained all the newspapers of the day, and from morning to night this special room in my hotel (Willard's) was packed by visitors, reading, chatting, writing, coming and going. In the centre I seated myself with my illustrated book on surgery lying ostentatiously on my knee, open at the most formidable-looking woodcut in the collection. I estimated the possibilities on the principle of 'The House that Jack Built.' Somebody might pass, his eyes might catch the woodcut, curiosity might be excited, questions asked, interest inspired, influence vouchsafed, and my shoulders decorated !

"Two days I sat there. Crowds came in, crowds went

out, but no one evinced any curiosity about me. Everybody was too occupied. Persistently I stuck to my seat with my surgical monstrosity always on view, but the whole idea seemed to be a wretched failure. Going were my five-and-twenty dollars, and the only man to whom I had taken an introduction was an Englishman, who helped the dollars on their way by borrowing a few of them and, by-the-by, forgetting to return them.

“Towards the end of the second day I noticed, sitting at the writing-table opposite me, an elderly gentleman, whose features were strangely familiar. Statesman, artist, author, or divine? I could not fix him in my mind, but there was the face that had stared at me from a hundred photographs. He must be a man of eminence, the very man for me. Look at the autograph-hunter edging up to the table and interrupting my contemplated victim in his evidently important correspondence with a wretched request for the writer’s autograph. Autograph fiends have no bowels of compassion, but what could he want with the old gentleman’s signature if the old gentleman was not a somebody? If I only had time to get to the bookstall and find out who he is! It is half an introduction to know a man’s name. No time; he is about to move. Did you ever as a boy hold the string of a trap-net and watch the bird as he hops around the limits of the snare? If you have ever felt the blood tingling in your veins on a cold March day as you take a firmer grip of the line, dreading to breathe lest you should startle your unconscious prey, you will realise my excitement as I approached

my unknown celebrity with the firm determination to catch him.

“He was courteous like the others, but too abrupt to be a divine. He must be a Cabinet Minister! Better still! No good, though. Whatever he was, he could do nothing. ‘Deliver your letters of introduction,’ he said. ‘Have none,’ I replied. He grunted disapproval. Without introduction the public ear was deaf. He was very sorry for me; he could not advise me, and he left the room. Failed again! The shades of evening were falling fast. My day’s fruitless vigil was over. I thought more than ever of my vanishing fifteen dollars and the prospective commercial value of my watch. My admiration of American institutions was ebbing. Still, the morrow found me again at my post. Hour after hour passed by, when suddenly my elderly gentleman appeared, and from the corner of my eye I saw him stop, catch sight of me, and, to my infinite gratification, make straight for me! ‘Are you not,’ he asked, ‘the young gentleman who spoke to me about a medical appointment yesterday?’ ‘I am,’ I replied. ‘Well, I have been thinking a great deal about you since. How was it you were so foolish as to come to America without letters? They are absolutely indispensable here.’

“I explained to him that I was stupid enough to believe America different from other countries, and the mere fact of introductions being used in Europe stamped them as superfluous here. I told him that a letter to General Banks which had been offered to me I had even refused to wait for, as it had to come from Paris.

“‘I know General Banks,’ he replied ; ‘I’ll give you a letter to him if you like, but I shall be bound to say I know nothing about you.’

“‘So long as I am able to get to him,’ I said, ‘I should ask for nothing more.’ And so my new friend sat down at once to write the letter.

“What an irresistible power curiosity sometimes has—though from my experience sometimes it hasn’t ! Here was I at last, gaining my desire, realising all my hopes of attaining the goal of my ambition, checking the outward flow of those five dollars, which once were five-and-forty, with the prospect of a pleasant occupation, and the innate satisfaction of proving to the family conclave the justice of all my anticipations, and yet the one thought at that moment uppermost in my mind was that at last I should learn who this elderly gentleman was. The letter was finished and handed to me, as he bade me good-bye and left me. It was short and business-like. It merely said that I was a perfect stranger to the writer, whom, passing through Washington, he had casually met, but that he had conceived an interest in me. He thought I was the kind of young man who meant business, and that if General Banks could put me in the way of getting what I wished, he would esteem it a personal favour. And there lay the signature before me—P. T. Barnum ! That great showman’s name, familiar as it was in England, meant much more in America, as I was soon to learn. He was popular, respected, and, in his own way, influential.

“The next morning found me at headquarters, armed with my letter. It was handed in. It passed me im-

mediately over the crowded anteroom of officers waiting an audience into the presence of the great man himself. It secured me a most cordial reception from him, with the subsequent friendship of the General and his family, which I valued; an endorsement of Mr. Barnum's letter, addressed to General Hammond, the surgeon-general, who had formerly declined any consideration of me, and finally, all I wanted. Who says there is no such factor as 'Chance' in life?"

I believe that most men who have undergone early experiences distasteful to themselves are in later life reticent in talking about them even to their most intimate friends. I know from troubles of that nature that I have been called upon to endure one tries to banish them, after they have been lived down, from one's own thoughts. I have learned to realise that it is even a miserable thing to dream about them in one's sleep. I think it is possible that some such reasons influence Charles Wyndham when he recalls the part he took in that gruesome American Civil War and make him rather silent concerning it. It is easy to understand that it must have been a terrible ordeal for a man (and he was a very young man then) of his fanciful and romantic temperament—a man who always loved to look on the bright side of life, and was destined to make the world all the merrier, and consequently all the happier, for his genial presence in it—it must have been terrible for such a man to participate in the grim horrors of the ghastly battlefields, though maybe he found some comfort in the knowledge that his medical ministrations

did much to alleviate the agonies of the wounded and lighten the last hours of the dying.

My dear friend the late Bret Harte, who was taking his share of a loyal American's duty at the same time (little dreaming that he and Charles Wyndham were to meet and become staunch friends in the far-off London days—when the one as author and the other as actor had reached the topmost rung of the ladder of fame), often used to tell me how the soldiers revered and loved the army surgeons, and would have sacrificed their own lives to protect them. It was with this knowledge in view that he penned the half-comic, yet wholly pathetic verses entitled

“HOW ARE YOU, SANITARY?”

“Down the picket-guarded lane
Rolled the comfort-laden wain,
Cheered by shouts that shook the plain,
Soldier-like and merry ;
Phrases such as camps may teach,
Sabre-cuts of Saxon speech,
Such as ‘Bully!’ ‘Them’s the peach!’
‘Wade in, Sanitary!’

“Right and left the caissons drew,
As the car went lumbering through,
Quick succeeding in review
Squadrons military ;
Sunburnt men with beards of frieze,
Smooth-faced boys, and cries like these—
‘U.S. San Com.’ ‘That’s the cheese!’
‘Pass in, Sanitary!’

“In such cheer it struggled on
Till the battle-front was won ;
Then the car, its journey done,
Lo ! was stationary ;



By permission of Sir George Newtons

SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM WHEN SURGEON IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY,
AGED TWENTY-SEVEN

Facing page 20

And where bullets whistling fly,
Came the sadder, fainter cry,
'Help us, brothers, ere we die—
Save us, Sanitary!'

"Such the work. The phantom flies,
Wrapped in battle-clouds that rise ;
But the brave—whose dying eyes,
Veiled and visionary,
See the jasper gates swing wide,
See the parted throng outside—
Hear the voice to those who ride!
'Pass in, Sanitary!'"

Probably Charles Wyndham was never so outspoken with regard to these grim and painfully remembered war experiences as he was on November 11th, 1899, when, speaking at a dinner given by the London Eccentric Club, he made a forcible and nobly responded to appeal on behalf of the English soldiers then fighting against fearful odds in South Africa. He said :—

"There is one special reason for my sympathy with the soldier. Some stray records may have reached your ears of a time when, not with bayonet and rifle, but with bandages, probes, and chloroform, I served with the Federal forces during the longest and most bitter conflict of modern days. Then I learned for the first time, and at first hand, what war really means, war—which if it does not make life worth the living, at least makes death worth the dying ; whose sunlight is fame and glory ; whose clouds are suffering and death in the field—sorrow and want in the home—the home abandoned by the soldier at his country's call. Do you know how our kinsmen cared for those their heroes had

left behind them? As you are doing now, with open heart and purse; as you are doing now, with growing and growing generosity, till they reached the point I hope we, too, may reach, of absolutely charging themselves with the present and future of every single home of every single soldier who went out to fight on their behalf. I had opportunities of watching the soldier under every kind of circumstance, in fair weather and in foul—now aflush with victory, now grimly patient under reverse. I have heard his wild shout in the fury of onset, and watched him set his teeth in the stern quietude of desperate resistance. I have seen death courted and victory wrested from despair, and I know, from his own lips, that, if the last hour had to come, he would be cheerful and ready to go, because all through he had been sustained by the solace of the thought that, come what would, those nearest and dearest to him would never know suffering or want. The dangers that were then are the same now—isolation, interrupted communications, exposure to the assault of an invisible enemy, whether in the gloom of American forest, or treacherous undulation of African veldt. And the great lesson I learnt then we are learning now—the duty of a nation to its brave defenders. When the war is over, and the soldiers' brows are crowned with victorious wreaths, let no brow be clouded with any shade of anxiety beneath those victorious wreaths! When the time comes for the soldier's 'bruised arms to be hung up for monuments,' let there be ready and waiting for him an unencumbered home to hang them in!"

This was at an ordinary annual gathering of members

at dinner, but so impressed were his audience with this unexpected appeal, that they, there and then, before they rose from the table, subscribed over £1,700, and presented it to Sir Charles for the cause he pleaded, who forwarded it to Lady Audrey Buller, the president of the Aldershot branch of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Fund.

Less than three months later, when the Eccentrics gave a "send-off" supper to seven of their comrades bound for the Transvaal, he returned to the same theme, and speaking very warmly, and manifestly inspired by the recollection of his own experiences, said :—

"Seven of those now volunteering for the war we are proud to claim as fellow-members of this club, and it is the health of those seven men, good and true, that it is my privilege to propose. They are giving up, without a murmur, lives of comfort and of care, of active careers and profitable occupations, the devotion of those nearest and dearest to them, the familiar welcome of the busy mart, the cheery greeting of accustomed haunts, and last, though not least, the sweet and simple society of their fellow-Eccentrics; and in exchange for these abandoned gifts, what do they gladly and enthusiastically accept? Toil, privation, discomfort, sorrow, pain, and—I will not fear to name what they do not fear to face—the chance of death. And to all these they are not moved by any of the incentives of the career of the mere adventurer or soldier of fortune; they are not foreign mercenaries, like the imported colonels who direct the strategy of the enemy and prostitute their military talents for gold, and sell their swords and souls for so much per month paid in advance. No, they go

because English blood dances in their veins, English steel leaps from their scabbards, and English cheers rise from their lips when they hear the call of Mother England's bugle, and, hearing, answer, 'Mother, we are ready!' Nor must we forget—and it is another point in their honour—what moment they choose to buckle on their armour. When all goes well, victories abound, and nothing remains but to deliver the *coup de grâce* to the enemy—it may not be a particularly brave thing to join. How different, however, is this situation! No sane man can deny its gravity, and it is now, with disasters behind us and perils before us, that gallant comrades leap into the breach, and devote themselves to their Fatherland! All honour to our soldiers seven! They are going out to help to change all this, to wipe out the sorrows of the past and bring us the joys of the future, and they will do it. Remember the darkest hour is always nearest to the dawn! In that Titanic struggle between the North and South of America, the North had to sustain heavier losses and greater defeats at first than we have yet, and so have we in nearly all our wars; but surely and slowly the indomitable Anglo-Saxon spirit built up a solid rampart of success; and so shall we now, in this war, despite bad news, if any, that may arrive in the immediate future. The tide begins to turn, the omens grow more favourable, but no omen can be so cheering, no sign from heaven so inspiring, as that high-born courage, that resourceful stoicism of the Englishman in a tight place. From the bottom of your hearts to the bottom of your glasses, I ask you to drink the toast, and echo with a shout the words I tell our

friends. We drink not only to your health, but to your safe return, and, come what may, to the eternal honour of you, our seven brave fellow-members. Our hearts will beat for joy when we hear—and we shall hear—of you and your comrades marching from victory to victory across the dreary veldt, over the stone-capped kopje, till, with drums beating and colours flying, the British legions thunder through the streets of the capital itself; and there—high on Pretoria's steeples—you will plant that emblem of the truest independence of the world—the grand old British flag, never, we trust, to be hauled down again. Go, brothers, and God be with you.

“Our hearts, our hopes, are all with you;
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, and tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with you, are all with you.”

It is in this wise that Charles Wyndham from time to time recalls the impressions that were made upon him by his experiences on blood-stained American battle-fields, and it is certain that without personal knowledge no man could give utterance to such stirring speeches. But while able to inspire others with military ardour, warfare had no charms or illusions for him, and while he did faithful, helpful work with bandages, splints, scalpel, anæsthetics, and, above all, cheery words of encouragement and consolation, the irresistible fairy footlights were, siren-like, ever beckoning and calling to him. In his military brigade there was no Orpheus to drown their alluring voices as that magic singer did for the crew of Jason and his good ship “Argo,” and even if it had been so, I fancy that, like Butes, the son of

Pandion, the fairest of all mortal men, he would have said farewell to his comrades, crying to his sirens, "I come, I come, to live and die with you, listening to your song."

Be this as it may, the young brigade surgeon returned to New York. Truly it has been said that war either hardens or softens. It never leaves a man the same as it found him. In his case it had softened, and he yearned for the chastening influence of an artistic life. Somehow managing to secure an engagement at a theatre, he resigned from the army and made his first entry on the boards with John Wilkes Booth, a member of a famous theatrical family, and subsequently the misguided and unhappy assassin of President Lincoln; but though he received encouragement from him and other members of the company (wherever he went, and at all periods of his life, Charles Wyndham has been popular), he failed to do himself justice, and being, to use his own expression, "dismissed for incompetency," he returned to the army, and was ordered to New Orleans, Port Hudson, and subsequently, on the frustrated invasion of Texas, to serve with his old patron, General Banks, as Commander-in-Chief. This was the spring of 1864. In the following winter the old and undying longing returned, and having been lucky enough to obtain an engagement with Mrs. John Wood's company, he once more tempted fortune on the stage. Thus it came about that at the Olympic Theatre, New York, he was allotted a far more important part than he had hitherto attempted. To this day he recalls how earnestly he studied one of the distressingly long speeches in

vogue in those days. It became an absolute torture to him. It made his days miserable and his nights sleepless. He thought more of the mere repetition of the words than the author's meaning in them, and it may be (though I never heard him say this) that they had very little meaning. Anyway, when it came to the point, this method of study proved to be disastrous. The palpitating young actor's speech was all about a lovely and equally young lady with whom he was supposed to be desperately in love. Excusing himself for untoward manifestations of his passion, his panegyric commenced with "Drunk with enthusiasm, I"—and so on to the end of an eloquent explanation. Unfortunately, after he had uttered the first word the would-be comedian's memory forsook him. "Drunk," he stammered, and then stood staring vacantly at an audience filled with what Charles Dickens once called an unholy joy. No wonder that he was misunderstood, and once more "dismissed for incompetency."

Then if he did not absolutely follow the example of the despondent, love-crossed crusader—if he did not actually

"Hang his harp on a willow tree,"

he was certainly

"Off to the wars again,"

and he stayed amid the roar and clash of battle, practising his healing art, until that awful struggle between North and South was nearly at an end.

How little he thought when, deeply mortified, and this time quite conscious of failure, he was compelled to resign his engagement with Mrs. John Wood, that the

accomplished and delightful actress would in later years play under his management at the London Criterion Theatre, and esteem it a privilege to be associated with his triumphs!

Shakespeare, who knew and could give beautiful expression to everything, tells us that—

“Wise men ne’er sit and wail their woes,
But presently prevent the ways to wail.”

And Charles Wyndham at once began to think how he could regain his lost ground in the stage-land that, in spite of initial rebuffs, he had resolved to conquer.

He determined that his next venture should be in his native country, and returning to England in 1865 with a play from his own pen in his pocket, he found a home for it and himself at the Theatre Royal, Manchester. The piece was called *Her Ladyship’s Guardian*, and was avowedly an adaptation of a novel by Major Edward Bruce Hamley entitled *Lady Lee’s Widowhood*. My old friend W. H. Vernon, who was then a member of the Manchester company and played in the piece, has told me that it bore a striking resemblance to *Rosedale*, a romantic drama in which John Lester Wallack had made a marked success in America. It would appear that this *Rosedale* had a great fascination for actors, for after his phenomenal career as Lord Dundreary at the Haymarket, E. A. Sothorn appeared in a distinct version of it by an anonymous writer (it was always supposed that Sothorn himself had a hand in it) entitled *A Wild Goose*.

In this not very successful production Mrs. Kendal—

then Miss Madge Robertson—played the heroine. In common with all clever women, she has a keen sense of humour, and concerning *A Wild Goose* she once told me an amusing little story. The plot demanded that Sothern, who has not been inaptly described as a “bundle of nerves,” should in the last act shoot someone, and (carrying out the tradition of stage firearms) his pistol on one fateful night failed to go off. Half mad with dismay and mortification, Sothern rushed at the lady who was to be his victim, and despatched her *with his penknife!*

In the light of after events it is very interesting to note that, long before they knew each other and became firm friends—in the days before *David Garrick*, in which both were to win fame and fortune, was produced—the two actors were in this *Rosedale* motive, a blend of strong interest with light comedy, working on the same lines—very difficult lines—lines in which they had few equals, and have never been excelled.

But to return to Manchester, *Her Ladyship's Guardian*, and my friend W. H. Vernon's account of this very interesting experiment. With himself and the enterprising actor-author, Charles Wyndham, the cast included Miss Vining (who was “starred”), Clifford Cooper and Mrs. Clifford Cooper (Miss Kemble), Fred Everill (the admirable comedian who subsequently took Henry Compton's vacant place—a difficult one to fill!—at the Haymarket), and Harry Thompson—a very droll character actor. It will thus be seen that the bold venture had every chance of the success that it achieved, and supplemented by the good old farce, *His*

Last Legs, in which Charles Wyndham scored immensely in the amusing character of O'Callaghan, the programme was decidedly popular. So popular that even in those days of ephemeral achievements it was thought well to revive it, with practically the same cast, at the Queen's Theatre, Dublin, during a short summer season. In connection with this production, W. H. Vernon writes me :—

“An incident occurred one night in which humour was blended with danger. There were three of us on the stage together—the actor who played the ‘old man’ of the piece, myself, and Miss Clara Dillon, the daughter of Charles Dillon, the then well-known Shakespearean tragedian and universally popular hero of the drama called *Belphegor the Mountebank*. Suddenly a limelight in the flies went off with a terrific ‘bang,’ leaving only a few lights burning in the front of the house, and startling both audience and actors into a condition of semi-panic. The actor who was playing the ‘old man’ and Miss Dillon rushed madly into the street, which was close at hand, and made a sensationally ludicrous effect on the passers-by ; as the gentleman was in full fox-hunting fig, and the lady in an equally effective stage costume. The audience also took fright and a perilous stampede seemed imminent ; but luckily we were able to pacify them, and after a brief stoppage of the play we went to work again without any mischief being done. We also appeared in some of the good old farces—Wyndham in *Trying it On*, and I in *Little Toddlekins*.”

As we shall presently see, the character of Mr.

Walsingham Potts, in the first-named piece, subsequently became a favourite one with the clever young author of *Her Ladyship's Guardian*.

What a pity it seems that some of these delightful little one-act pieces, instinct with the memory of the Keeleys, John Baldwin Buckstone, Henry Compton, Charles Mathews, and the fun-inspired authors who wrote for them, cannot be revived! To the present generation they would be novelties, and surely they are far more diverting than most of the so-called comic pieces that are represented on the stage of to-day. Unluckily for them, and those who would like to laugh at them again, they are branded with those hopeless words in the theatrical world, "old-fashioned."

I should like here to finish my friend Vernon's letter, for it is one of the many proofs that born actors quickly become good comrades, and are ever ready to give each other a helping hand.

"Later on," he writes, "Charles Wyndham did me a good turn, with Miss Herbert, of the St. James's Theatre, with whom he was touring in the summer of a subsequent season. They were acting the old comedies, and he was the Charles Surface to the Joseph of Henry Irving. He left Miss Herbert at Dublin to fulfil an engagement with Miss Kate Terry, and very kindly wrote me to Bristol that if I liked to take his place he had arranged it for me. Of course, I was delighted to accept the offer, for then it was a big jump for me to join a London company, and accordingly I appeared as Charles Surface at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, with Miss Herbert as Lady Teazle, Miss Ada Cavendish

as Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Frank Mathews as Mrs. Candour, Henry Irving as Joseph Surface (*the best !*), Frank Mathews as Sir Peter Teazle, Gaston Murray as Sir Benjamin Backbite, and J. D. Stoye as Moses."

Truly a notable cast !

In 1890, in an address given to the Twentieth Century Club at Chicago, Charles Wyndham, humorously and somewhat fancifully alluding to his early experiences, and modestly calling them "failures," went back to the days when he was a medical student in Dublin, and said :—

"Then came a moment—that solemn moment in every man's life—when the petals of his heart open to imbibe the sunshine of love. I met a young lady only nineteen years of age who was not only young and pretty, but she wore a widow's cap. Imagine the treble attraction of youth, beauty, and a widow's cap ! and add to this the interest that this young widow became a widow on the afternoon of her wedding day, and you can realise what a halo of romance hung round her head. I at once, for the first time in my life, began to write poetry. It pleased her, and she was gracious enough to accept my verses, and sweet enough to give me promise of hope. I went to work to gain my diplomas. At last the hour arrived when I submitted myself for my examination and gained my diplomas. But I regret to say, so inconsistent is human nature, that by that time I had forgotten all about my widow, and she had married her brother-in-law.

"But there I stood at that moment, a full-fledged doctor, and on the strength of my diplomas, the only possession I had in the world, I married a lady to whom I had sworn love long before I met the widow. She had a little money, I had none. No patient darkened my door. In vain I wore stiff white neckties ; in vain I prayed for a bald head and a slight rotundity of body—things which I now look forward to with dread every morning. It was weary waiting for the unattainable. At last, however, came the writing on the wall. Going down to my bank upon some matters of business, I learned that I had overdrawn my balance. My banking account had died a calm and peaceful death, leaving no trace behind. Out of the little remnant of my possessions I retained sufficient money to leave behind me while I came across to this country to try my fortunes in the war. And now I timidly approach another failure. When winter came, not wishing for an inactive life, my thoughts turned once more to the stage. In my old London amateur days there was a little weekly journal which contained flattering allusions to myself as an actor. One week the mantle of Macready had fallen upon my shoulders ; another I was to be the born successor to Charles Mathews ; a third, a celebrated actor, Tyrone Power, was not in it with me. They were all magnificent notices. I know it, for I wrote them all myself. These notices I one day sent out to the different managers in America, and one man was so impressed by them that he lost no time in inviting me to become a member of his company. In a very few weeks' time he suggested my resignation,

as being totally unfit for the stage. I resigned. I managed later to secure an engagement in New York with Mrs. John Wood. In a painfully short space of time Mrs. Wood, like her predecessor, suggested my resignation.

"After one or two ineffectual attempts like these I came to the conclusion that America was not sufficiently advanced in art to appreciate me. I recrossed the water and offered my valuable services to English managers. One was so thoroughly impressed with my own convictions that he entrusted to me an important part, the part of Shaun, the Post, in *Arrah-na Pogue*. I fear that the first evening had not advanced far when he regretted his confidence, and one of the papers the next morning had the bad taste to say that my brogue was sufficient to justify a Fenian rising. Here was another failure. You will thus see, ladies and gentlemen, how the seas of adverse fate have gradually but effectually sapped the confidence which would permit me to address you."

In this, my opening chapter, I quote freely from this speech, because I think it is always good to see how the brave and cheerful spirit of a man who loves to get all the sunshine he can out of his own life, and to shed as much of it as is possible on the lives of his fellow-creatures, can in after years recall, not only lightly, but with a bright sense of fun, those early disappointments that must at the time have seemed heartbreaking. Such recollections gaily conjured up cheer the drooping hopes of the despondent and act like an invigorating tonic to those who have yet to win their spurs.



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SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AS "SHAUN THE POST" IN "ARRAGH NA POGUE"

Facing page 34

In spite of so-called "failures," Charles Wyndham's appearance in *Her Ladyship's Guardian*, and in other pieces in the English provinces, sufficed to win him an early call to the actor's Mecca—London.

CHAPTER II

THE CURTAIN UP

HOW true it is that faith is strong in the young and hope stronger! Fully endowed with these stimulating aids to self-help, Charles Wyndham now boldly sought an engagement at a West End London theatre, secured one at the Royalty, and appeared there on May 21st, 1866, as Sir Arthur Lascelles, in Morton's well-worn old play, *All that Glitters is not Gold*, still beloved by amateurs. During the season he was seen in other pieces, but his most remarkable achievement at the little Soho playhouse was his appearance, in November, 1866, as Hatchett, in F. C. Burnand's phenomenally popular burlesque on Douglas Jerrold's well-known nautical drama, *Black-eyed Susan*. The theatre was then managed by the captivating Miss Patty Oliver. She appeared in the title-rôle; Miss Rosina Ranoe was William; James Danvers, Dame Hatley; Miss Fanny Heath, Gnatbrain; Miss Nellie Bromley, Dolly Mayflower; and Fred Dewar, Captain Crosstree. Those who are lucky enough to remember (I am glad to say I am one of them) that delicious piece of fooling will never forget it.

Compared with it, the "musical comedies" of to-day

form very dull entertainment. The piece did not depend on gorgeous stage mounting or costly costumes, but on the true spirit of travesty, brilliant dialogue, genuine acting, and good singing. The audiences were enthusiastic ; Miss Patty Oliver sang "Pretty See-usan, don't say no" about a dozen times every night to repeated encores ; and that excellent comedian, Fred Dewar, was equally successful with his "Captain Cross-tree is my Name," sung to the then extremely popular air of "Champagne Charlie is my Name," although, be it understood, the words were much smarter than those of that inane music-hall ditty.

Of Charles Wyndham's performance in this pleasant production Sir Francis C. Burnand, in his interesting *Records and Reminiscences*, says : "Charles Wyndham was a wonderful dancer, and however nonsensical might have been what he had to do, he was thoroughly in earnest when doing it."

This, of course, is the right spirit in which to play burlesque, but only the true artist can give proper effect to it. It is as essential for a well-equipped actor to be a good dancer as it is to be a good fencer ; and the fact that the ex-army surgeon was ready when called upon to disport himself in this branch of his profession is ample proof that, in spite of his arduous occupation and early stage rebuffs, he had found time to prepare himself for the work of his heart. To become a good ballroom dancer is not a very difficult thing ; to achieve success as a stage dancer requires not only training, but constant practice.

How little did author and actor think, in the

November of 1866, that the day would come when they would jointly receive their well-won honour of knighthood from the hand of King Edward VII. !

I do not think it is generally known that the author, encouraged no doubt by the fame of his merry little piece, appeared in it himself (as Captain Crosstree) on a short provincial tour. In this connection I venture to interpolate an old and forgotten playbill. Mr. Alfred Bishop, the Hatchett of the cast, has for years done loyal work in the Wyndham successes ; Mr. Harry Cox, the Dame Hatley, became a warm favourite at the Strand Theatre ; and Miss Marie Longmore, the Susan, took rank amongst the prettiest and brightest of burlesque actresses. In "boys'" parts she was as good as Miss Marie Wilton (now Lady Bancroft), and that is high praise.

Truly an ample evening's entertainment ! An excellent comedy, and two burlesques to follow ! It would be enough to keep the slack playgoers of 1904 out of the theatre ! Note, too, the comparative cheapness of the prices even for a provincial theatre. But in these days of bustle we want everything to be done in a hurry, and while we do not mind paying heavily for them, we want even our amusements to be compressed into the shortest possible space of time.

That Sir Francis loved acting is well known to all who have read his most interesting records of that famous Cambridge amateur club of which he was the founder. Of this touring experiment he says, "I found (as at another time I did with 'readings') that it must be one thing or the other—either go on the boards as actor

NEW THEATRE ROYAL, BRIGHTON.

Sole Proprietor and Manager, MR. H. NYE CHART, authorised to perform the
Pieces of the Dramatic Authors' Society.

This Evening, Friday, August 30th,

A COMPLIMENTARY BENEFIT to

MR. F. C. BURNAND,

And last night but one of his appearance this season.

NOTICE.—This evening the doors will be open at half-past six,
and Performances commence at Seven precisely.

On Friday Evening, August 30th, 1867,

The Performance will commence with—for the Fifth time in Brighton—

JOHN BROUGHAM's New and Popular Comedy of

PLAYING WITH FIRE.

Herbert Waverley	MR. LEWIS NANTON.
Doctor Savage	MR. DAN LEESON.
Uncle Timothy	MR. H. LEIGH.
Pinchbeck	MR. HARRY COX.
James	MR. HATHERILL.
Mrs. Doctor Savage	MISS NELLY ROLLASON. (MRS. H. NYE CHART.)
Mrs. Herbert Waverley	MISS B. ADAMS.
Perkins	MISS HETTY TRACEY.
The Widow Crabsticke	MRS. H. LEIGH.
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To be followed by the Burlesque in One Act, by F. C. BURNAND, entitled—

PATIENT PENELOPE;

OR, THE RETURN OF ULYSSES.

Ulysses (commonly called the Crafty) MR. F. C. BURNAND.

"In useful art successfully refined;
Art-ful in speech, in action, and in mind."

Eurymachus (one of Penelope's suitors, for this occasion
only)

MRS. F. C. BURNAND.

Medon (Penelope's servant) MR. HARRY COX.

Penelope (Wife to Ulysses) MISS ROSINA RANOB.

To conclude with F. C. BURNAND's Burlesque, now acting
in London to crowded houses, entitled—
The latest Edition of

BLACK-EYED SUSAN ;

Or,

“The Little Bill that was taken up.”

Lord High Admiral	.	.	.	MR. H. LEIGH.
Captain Crosstree, R.N. (by the Author)	.	.	.	MR. F. C. BURNAND.
William (her original character)	.	.	.	MISS ROSINA RANOE.
Hatchett (a Deal Smuggler)	.	.	.	MR. A. BISHOP.
Raker (an I-deal Smuggler)	.	.	.	MISS B. ADAMS.
Doggrass (Susan's Uncle)	.	.	.	MR. SILBURNE.
Gnatbrain	.	.	.	MISS HETTY TRACEY.
Admiral of the Blue	.	.	.	MR. HATHERILL.
Admiral of the Yellow	.	.	.	MR. ATTREE.
Admiral of the White	.	.	.	MR. WYNNE.
Admiral of the Black	.	.	.	MR. HARLAND.
Shaun O'Ploughshare	.	.	.	MR. E. J. GEORGE.
Telegraph Clerk	.	.	.	MISS WALSTEIN.
Susan	.	.	.	MISS MARIE LONGMORE.
Dolly Mayflower	.	.	.	MISS ATTREE.
Dame Hatley	.	.	.	MR. HARRY COX.

Marines: MISS KENT, MISS ATHERSOL, MISS A. ST. CLAIRE,
and MISS L. ST. CLAIRE.

- Scene 1. The Downs of Deal.
(Being a View in which you'll see a deal of the Downs.)
- Scene 2. Interior of Dame Hatley's Cottage.
- Scene 3. Exterior of the “Admiral Benbow” Tavern.
Double Hornpipe by William and Susan.
- Scene 4. Telegraph Office.
- Scene 5. On the Deck of H.M.S. *Polly Phemus*.

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Second price as near nine o'clock as possible.

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Stage Manager, MR. DAN LEESON. Treasurer, MR. THOMAS CHART.

and author, or stay off and be content with being author and writer. If this hadn't been my decision, of course I should have had to retire from the staff of *Punch*, as to attend 'in my place' at the Cabinet Council dinners every Wednesday, and yet be performing at the same time in the provinces, would have been a *tour de force* only to be accomplished by the historic bird of Sir Boyle Roche that 'could not be in more than two places at once.' "

No doubt in the second Captain Crosstree of the travesty we lost a good actor, but we have gained by the untiring industry of a brilliant writer who has done much to add to the gaiety of English-speaking nations.

The latest edition of *Black-eyed Susan* held its own at the Royalty for quite two years, but long before the piece had run its course Charles Wyndham, laudably anxious to be recognised as a *bona-fide* comedian rather than a clever performer in frivolous burlesque, sought, and obtained, another engagement.

The stage doors of the leading London playhouses were now open to him, and he had little difficulty in installing himself as a member of Miss Herbert's excellent company at the St. James's Theatre. His first appearance on those boards was in April, 1867, in a play founded by George Roberts (Robert Walters) on a novel by "Ouida," and partly perhaps on Miss Edwards's *Half a Million of Money*. It was called *Idalia*. Miss Herbert (what a charming actress she was!) played the title-rôle; Henry Irving, Count Falcon; F. Charles, Victor Vane; D. Stoye, Volpone Vitello; Gaston Murray, Baron Lintz; Charles Wyndham, Hugh Stone-

leigh ; and Mrs. Frank Mathews, Madame Paravent. Of this engagement, and the initial production of *Idalia*, Charles Wyndham writes, in a contribution to the Philadelphia *Clover Club*, compiled by its respective members :—

“Oh that first night ! In those days, by-the-by, managers would insist on casting me for the virtuous heroes, and Irving for the vicious ones, although our proclivities in no way justified the selection. But what a charming villain Irving was ! the only actor I have ever seen who has been able to make villainy on the stage appear, as it should appear, lovable. The opening scene of *Idalia* was a rocky defile, in which I was suddenly attacked by Irving and left for dead. The stage-manager had outshone himself in the production of a grandly impressive scene, in which the demands of realism were observed by the introduction of a natural waterfall, descending from the flies at the side, passing under a massive bridge, and rushing wildly and obliquely across the stage. It was certainly a gorgeous scene ; an inspiring one, bound to elicit uproarious approval. Well, on the first night it did, and during the rest of the evening that waterfall was never forgotten. It was supposed, as I have said, to dash under a massive bridge, which, by-the-by, sloped down towards the footlights, in full view of the audience ; but stage-managers propose and stage waterfalls dispose. It was its first appearance on the boards, and, like most beginners, it wanted to do too much ; it not only dashed under the bridge, but it trickled over the bridge, and on its passage across the stage it oozed from its proper



Photo by London Stereoscopic Co.

SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM IN OUIDA'S "IDALIA"

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channel in several little independent rivulets down towards the footlights. Wherever that inexperienced water went it left the stage slippery. Thunders of applause greeted the enthusiastic *débutant*, and all the time the traitor was preparing for the annihilation of his brother artists. Gracefully down the bridge came F. Charles. He touched the slippery part of the bridge, threw his arms out wildly, away went his cloak in the torrent, and—well, he sat down. With dramatic instinct in every nerve of his body, firmly entered, half a minute afterwards, Henry Irving—looked about him warily, then strode to the bridge till he also reached the fatal spot, threw his arms wildly round, and—well, he sat down. Need I say that the awe of the situation was fading? Now came my turn. Standing on a platform behind the scene from the commencement, I had seen what had happened to my two friends, so, stepping gingerly upon the bridge, I arrived on the stage without sitting down, had my encounter with the two ruffians, escaped from them, had run wildly up the bridge again to receive the shot from Count Falcon's pistol, and had fallen, according to the stage-manager's instructions, a foot or so below the treacherous spot. On came Idalia—she had heard the shot. 'Ah! a body on the bridge!' She runs down, recognises me—'Great Heavens, 'tis he!—rushes further down, reaches the fatal place, away go her arms, and—well, she sat down, the folds of her dress falling over me and completely hiding me from the view of the audience. That was the end of the act—it was a powerful one. We had all done our level best, but the waterfall had scored the

most, to the delighted amusement of a laughing audience.

“The next scene was a simple drawing-room. The waterfall had gone, thank Heaven, and we could rely upon ourselves. The act began. It was interesting and dramatic—a powerful scene between Miss Herbert and Irving—accusation of murder, defiance, vengeance for my death—all very startling; sufficiently so to drive for the time the slippery knave from everybody’s mind. A great scene, well acted and well received; everything going splendidly, and an effect in store bound to please the audience.

“The hero is not dead, for he suddenly appears; appears as a hero always does, at the back of the stage; great applause at his resuscitation; Miss Herbert backs with joy and surprise right to the footlights, and I prepare to rush towards her; success is in our grasp; the audience is in splendid humour; spite of all difficulties, we have triumphed. Alas! the vanity of human hopes! The waterfall was lying in wait for me. I told you the scene was a drawing-room, but I did not tell you that it was an Italian one, consequently that the carpet covered only the centre of the stage. Across it I madly rushed towards my faithful love. ‘Idalia!’ I exclaimed, ‘I never expected to see you again!’—reached one of those rivulets that had trickled in exactly the same direction that I was going—reached it unknowingly—slipped, and—well, *I* sat down.

“Never in the whole course of my life have I heard such a roar as went up from the auditorium.

“Need I go on? Need I tell you how in the next

scene, when she and I were supposed to be escaping from the Austrian soldiery, those brave heroes came on, and, as the first slipped over our general enemy, the others came tumbling after? How massive rocks were knocked over by the fallen bodies, and how this act terminated in convulsions on the part of the audience? Need I tell you that, in the last act, the actors had become, through sheer helplessness, as demoralised as the audience—that I assured my love, in a voice smothered by laughter, that nothing would shake my firmness of belief in her—that she chuckled out she believed me—or that Irving came on to die in a white shirt, a blood-red spot on his breast, and his face all grins, dying the most facetious death actor ever died?”

Charles Wyndham stayed with Miss Herbert throughout that season, and in the summer of 1867 supported Miss Kate Terry during her farewell appearances at Manchester. That was a notable engagement. Than Miss Terry no more popular actress ever graced the stage. Her early retirement was the subject of general regret, and it says much for the young actor that he was able to do good service with her in such parts as Claudio, Modus, Henri de Neuville, and Laertes.

In October, 1867, he was engaged by Alfred Wigan for the opening of the Queen's Theatre in Long Acre. The first attraction at the new playhouse was Charles Reade's drama, *The Double Marriage*. This work had been more than suggested by Macquets' French play, *Le Chateau Grantier*, and when it had been rejected by several London managers its impetuous adapter turned it into the still well-known novel called *White Lies*.

Content with the success of this, Reade, who did not like having his work refused, would possibly have allowed his play to remain on the shelf, if his old friend (and subsequent biographer) John Coleman had not advised him to submit it to Alfred Wigan, who at once accepted it, and engaged an excellent company to support him and Mrs. Wigan in the production. An especial attraction was that Miss Ellen Terry, as popular then as she is now, was engaged after a long absence from the stage to appear in an important character, and other parts were entrusted to Miss Fanny Addison, Miss Henrietta Hodson (now Mrs. Labouchere), Charles Wyndham, and Lionel Brough, who then, finally abandoning his useful career as a journalist, made his first professional appearance on the London stage.

That he was an acquisition to it we happily know to this day. Than Lionel Brough no better actor in his own line of dramatic art ever trod the stage. As a perfect impersonator of Shakespeare's comedy characters his name will ever live.

Now when this play entitled *The Double Marriage* was produced, Charles Reade neglected to mention that his popular story, *White Lies*, on which the play was avowedly founded, had been taken from a French source ; and when astute critics noted this fact and gave publicity to it, the irascible author was very angry. It seems strange that so great a man as the author of that glorious romance, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, should care to annex another writer's story without acknowledgment ; but Charles Reade lived in days when piracy from French dramatists was regarded as quite an innocent recreation.

He must have been an odd man to deal with. Miss Ellen Terry, who had much to do with him as author and stage-manager, summed him up as "dear, lovable, aggravating, childlike, crafty, gentle, obstinate, and entirely delightful and interesting Charles Reade."

According to John Coleman, *The Double Marriage* was another of those pieces that had to undergo half-comical, half-pathetic, first-night troubles. Josephine, its heroine, is supposed to have given birth to a child under circumstances which, although ultimately explained satisfactorily, appear at the moment most compromising. The child is discovered; the unfortunate mother's honour, happiness, her very life are at stake. In this supreme moment her sister, a single young girl, the incarnation of truth, purity, and innocence, comes forward in the presence of her affianced husband and her mother, and to save Josephine from shame, brands herself with infamy. Taking the child in her arms, she declares it to be her own.

"I can conceive," says Charles Reade's biographer, "no dramatic situation in existence stronger than this. To the well-grounded skill of Miss Ellen Terry was entrusted this striking incident. This distinguished actress had retired suddenly and unexpectedly from dramatic life. Hence, when she emerged from her retirement, her first appearance was looked forward to with eager and unwonted interest. She was fully equal to the occasion: her form dilated, her eyes sparkled with fire, her voice trembled, as she exclaimed in tones of passionate emotion, '*I am its mother!*'"

"At this moment Reade told me that there burst

forth a roar of derision which shook the building, and a howl of savage laughter arose which he should never forget if he lived to the age of old Parr. The curtain fell amidst yells, and the piece was doomed then and there. Indeed, it was only kept in the bill until something could be prepared to take its place."

Always loyal to his friend, the writer goes on to suggest "that although the presence of that unfortunate baby was fatal to *The Double Marriage*, at that very time the old Prince of Wales's Theatre was being crowded nightly with audiences which not only tolerated the D'Alroy baby in the last act of *Caste*, but absolutely shed tears over it. The critics who saw genius in the one piece," he says, "could detect nothing but the quintessence of absurdity in the other. The adage that one man may steal a horse and ride off on his back in triumph, while if the other looks over the hedge he is dragged off to durance vile, was never more appositely illustrated than on this occasion."

But surely the question is one of treatment? Babies are always dangerous elements in plays, and are far more likely to provoke laughter than sympathy from the curiously mixed audiences that will always be found within the walls of a theatre. If they are "real, live" babies, they are (poor little things!) apt to cry at the wrong moments; if they are dolls, they are absurdities.

Tom Robertson—a husband and a father—in his affections as tender as a woman, knew just how to handle the pretty idea that he had conjured up for the solution of the difficulties that beset *Caste*. The result was an

appeal to every human heart. The men and women of the workaday world who sat in the gallery understood it as well as the titled and wealthy folk who luxuriated in the stalls, and one of those unmistakable thrills of sympathy went through the house that stamp the enduring hall-mark of success on any play.

Charles Reade, a bachelor and a dealer in matter of fact rather than sentiment, used that *enfant terrible* of his imagination roughly, and at a crucial moment it spurned him. But I think, as a rule, infants in arms are no more popular behind the footlights than they are in the auditorium.

Having given John Coleman's "front of the house" description of this eventful night, I must now quote Charles Wyndham's statement of what took place behind the scenes and on the stage. He told it to me in his own characteristic way somewhat as follows:—

"Act I. Miss Fanny Addison, Miss Ellen Terry, her younger sister, and their mother are living in the Chateau, and through the Revolution have been reduced to the direst straits . . . Miss Addison has been engaged to a young officer, myself, who has been reported as killed at the seat of war, Egypt. An old General (Alfred Wigan) is billeted on them for a time. He realises their sad position, and being interested in them, proposes to give them the protection of his name, and what little there is of his purse. He proposes, merely as a matter of form, for he is on his way in an hour to the wars, to marry Miss Addison. Such a marriage will free them from some political pressure, and as she

has lost her lover, she, for the sake of mother and sister, consents to the wedding, immediately after which he goes to the war. Barely an hour after his departure I turn up, almost dying. I have been kept a prisoner in Egypt, with no means of communication. I am ill and suffering, but have hastened to the Chateau, hearing of the distress of the ladies, having after my escape to France hurried here to give them the same political support that the General has just given, by marrying the girl of my heart. Then has the confession to be made that only an hour ago she had been wedded to the General, now off to the war. The news is crushing, and I leave them with the determination, ill as I am, to go to the war and (to use the author's words) seek a soldier's grave. I am too ill, however, to go far ; I fall into a swoon in the presence of the ladies.

“Act II. Great developments have taken place—and a couple of years have passed. I have been tenderly nursed by my friends, and on receipt of the news that the General has been killed, I have married Miss Addison and a child has been born to us. There is the child in the cradle. The cradle of the child !—and the cradle of our disaster ! By stage directions everybody is cooing over the baby and rocking its cradle. Now comes a letter from the General from Egypt ; the General alive and on his way to his wife ! Will follow almost as soon as the letter arrives. Consternation ! and once more, when the ladies anxiously ask themselves what is to be done, I come to the rescue by announcing that I would at once go back to the war and seek a soldier's grave. We all leave the room, but not before

we've all had one more look at the "precious," and started that cradle working again. No one needs to be present to realise that this is a dangerous situation; the room is empty, all but the cradle, which is very assertively rocking from side to side, and already the uncomfortable titter is audible; but when a friend of the General's opens the centre door, puts his head in and whispers mysteriously to the audience that 'the General is coming up the stairs—what a surprise there will be!' it can easily be understood that that working cradle was going to be very much indeed a surprise to the poor old General, and the audience went into absolute convulsions. From that point on everything was hilarious. At the end of the third act I was again doomed to bear a forlorn hope on the field of battle and again seek a soldier's grave; and it is not surprising that when in the fourth act the old General tells his unhappy bride that he knows all and has procured a dispensation (or whatever it was) to cancel the marriage, and Miss Addison has declared it was immaterial to her, since I was dead (for I had been again reported to have secured a soldier's death), and the General had burst forth with, 'No, he is not dead! he lives!' the audience enjoyed a final laugh, and assured Wigan that it was impossible; I couldn't be alive after all that."

Be that as it may, Charles Reade's mischievous stage baby indirectly did a good turn to Charles Wyndham. Full of good moments though the drama was, he could hardly distinguish himself in *The Double Marriage*; but when that luckless venture was as speedily as possible withdrawn to make way for a stopgap revival of Tom

Taylor's perennial *Still Waters Run Deep*, opportunity served him. The cast was an admirable one. Alfred Wigan resumed his original character of the self-contained John Mildmay; Mrs. Alfred Wigan was the Mrs. Sternhold; and Miss Ellen Terry played to admiration the by no means easy character of Mrs. Mildmay. Charles Wyndham was the Captain Hawkesley, and in the character of that well-drawn rascal made a very palpable hit. How little he and his colleagues then thought that he was destined to become one of the very best of all John Mildmays in those halcyon days that were as yet far beyond his reach! So successful was this production (and it was generally admitted that the latest Captain Hawkesley had a great deal to do with its popularity) that, although the play was an old one, and the theatre a new and somewhat out-of-the-way one, it ran for some three months.

In the December of the year the company was strengthened by the engagement of Henry Irving, and, by the light of these days, it is interesting to recall the fact that in a revival of David Garrick's one-act excision from the *Taming of the Shrew*, known as *Katherine and Petruchio*, he and Miss Ellen Terry—destined to do such world-famous Shakespearean work at the Lyceum Theatre—played together for the first time.

Of this episode in her famous career Miss Terry has recorded:—"From the first I noticed that Mr. Irving worked more concentratedly than all the other actors put together, and the most important lesson of my working life I learnt from him, that to do one's work well one must *work continually*, live a life of constant

self-denial for that purpose, and, in short, keep one's nose upon the grindstone. It is a lesson one had better learn early in stage life, I think, for the bright, glorious, healthy career of an actor is but brief at the best."

It is a lesson that Charles Wyndham had taken well to heart, and I know that in those memorable days at the Queen's Theatre Miss Terry had recognised its meaning in him as well as in his lifelong friend, Henry Irving.

But Henry Irving and Charles Wyndham had had an earlier meeting than this. Speaking at the Actors' Association Meeting at the Lyceum Theatre on March 29th, 1898, the latter said :—

"Much depends for the prosperity of our association on whom we elect as chairman ; and if our present chairman and the man we propose to re-elect require anyone to vouch for him, I do not think that a better voucher, in view of my long friendship with him, could be found than myself. I fancy, looking around me in this theatre, that I am the oldest friend he has, and I will yield to no one in the strength of that friendship. I can remember him from very, very early days—in fact, when he and I have stood together waiting outside a manager's room with the possible chance of a two pounds or three pounds a week engagement. I remember the incident vividly, because, whilst conversing with him upon things in general and our engagement in particular, I stuck my arm through the window-pane. I don't know whether you are aware of it, but to stick your elbow through the window-pane of a manager whilst you are trying to

worry an engagement out of him is considered a breach of etiquette. I regret to say that on this occasion I had not the money to pay for the damages, and such are the remarkable coincidences of my life, Irving hadn't it either. However, the manager came along, and happily said it was of no consequence, and by comparison with the object of our visit, Irving and I thought so too. I mention this to prove to you the length of my acquaintance and the intimate knowledge I have of it. And I want to point out to you what all of you know, but not to the same extent as myself, that during the whole of his professional career the one great characteristic of it has been the subordination of every interest to the prosperity and dignity of our calling. Never did we want a president so firm, so good, and with such a reputation as we do this year, and, therefore, it is with the greatest delight that I propose his re-election."

In the early days of 1868 everyone's favourite, J. L. Toole, joined this admirable band of players, and appeared for the first time as Michael Garner, in H. J. Byron's charming domestic drama, *Dearer than Life*. Recalling that engagement, the popular comedian enthusiastically says, "Michael Garner has always been a favourite with my audiences. And what a support I had! You don't get such a cast nowadays. Fancy, Charles Wyndham, John Clayton, Lionel Brough, Miss Henrietta Hodson, and Henry Irving!"

Of this wholesome, touching, yet withal humorous production a leading critic wrote: "Long ago in Caleb Plummer Mr. Toole proved that he not only possessed the quaintest and most genial humour, but that, like

most genuine humorists, he had a large fund of pathos. Nothing could have been more natural, more touching, more effective, than his representation of Michael Garner, the honest tradesman, the loving husband, the courageous and self-sacrificing toiler. The character may be rare, but that it is real was proved by the actor. Every situation in the piece was made striking and successful by Mr. Toole's thorough earnestness and his artistic attention to detail. The second act bears a dangerous resemblance to the second act of *The Porter's Knot*, and with any other actor it might have been a failure. But Mr. Toole is thoroughly original, and the resemblance of the piece to that in which the late Mr. Robson achieved his greatest success only serves to show the contrast between the styles of the two actors. In some of the scenes he far excelled his impersonation of the old toy-maker, great as that was. The finest points were in the close of the second and the beginning of the third acts. The intense grief of the father when his son's guilt is revealed, the outburst of passionate affection when he implores him to fly from justice, and the utter despair which followed, were wonderfully realised. In the garret scene Mr. Toole improved upon himself. His delineation of the brave old man who could endure starvation with a pleasant face, and could be cheerful under the heaviest burden of misery, was only surpassed by the sudden exhibition of passion when, excited by the drink which his worthless brother has brought him, Michael flamed out into a denunciation of his son's guilt. Again, on the conclusion of the drama, when the old man's ready wit, inspired by unexpected good

fortune, obtained a fair opportunity, Mr. Toole contrived to mingle with consummate skill the humour and pathos of the situation."

And apart from this—one of our genial comedian's best impersonations—how well the piece was acted by one and all concerned in it! As the errant son—Charley Warner—a very trying part to play, Charles Wyndham was admirable; and as his "raffish" friend, Bob Gassitt, a most unpleasant character, Henry Irving acted with scrupulous care and artistic taste, and, the two, set far-sighted critics thinking that in them London possessed actors likely to come to the front, though they did not realise that as premier comedian and tragedian of their day they would rank as the first actor-knights. Nothing could exceed the power, leavened with humour, of Lionel Brough as the disreputable, drink-sodden Uncle Ben, and John Clayton, then on the threshold of a bright but all too brief career, proved himself of the right quality in a smaller part. And how well the actors were supported by Mrs. Dyas, Miss Everard, and Miss Henrietta Hodson! I suppose by the playgoers of to-day *Dearer than Life* would be voted terribly dull and (that worst crime of all in stage plays!) "old-fashioned," but I believe that those playgoers who, in common with myself, can recall the happy evenings on which it was played by that singularly perfect cast would gladly see it again.

Except for the works of Ibsen, some of whose plays are "domestic" to the probing point, and horribly suggestive of the grim operating theatres of the hospital, the taste for the quiet, homelike, yet withal humorous

productions of such writers as H. J. Byron and H. T. Craven has died out. Its resuscitation would bode well for the future of the English stage.

It was during the run of *Dearer than Life* that Toole and Lionel Brough betook themselves to a photographer's studio to be "taken" as the broken-down brothers in the garret scene. Brough, wonderfully made-up, wore the regulation workhouse costume, and Toole was as shabby as an out-at-elbows, insolvent tradesman could well be. The representative of Michael Garner was always fond of a little practical joke, and while the operator was at work on the negative he suggested to his companion that they should take a stroll in their realistic stage make-up in the adjacent West End square. Toole soon stopped and knocked at the door of the handsome mansion of a wealthy, purse-proud individual, who, having sprung from nothing, was notoriously ashamed of his less prosperous relations and anxious to pose as the intimate friend of his aristocratic neighbours.

The door was opened by a magnificently pompous, powdered and plushed footman, who looked in dismay on the disreputable intruders.

"Master in?" asked Toole.

"No, he is not," said the indignant flunkey.

"Not in?" said Toole, with an air of disappointment, which was also conveyed by the by-play of Brough. "Well, when he comes home, young man, tell him as his two brothers from the workhouse called to see him."

With that they shuffled away. Whether the powdered

and plushed one, who evidently believed in the actor's story, satisfied his outraged feelings by following the example of Mr. Whiffers, the Bath footman immortalised in the chronicles of the Pickwick Club, and who, it will be remembered, "resigned" when he was asked to eat cold meat, history deponeth not. It must be a terrible thing for a self-respecting flunkey to feel that the man from whom he receives a munificent salary, and at whose (servants' hall) table he condescends to sit, should sink so low in the social scale as to have two brothers in the workhouse !

On July 24th, 1868, another play from the prolific pen of H. J. Byron—*The Lancashire Lass*—was produced at the Queen's Theatre. In this Charles Wyndham acquitted himself bravely as the hero, Ned Clayton, and in the cast were Henry Irving, Sam Emery, Lionel Brough, John Clayton, Miss Henrietta Hodson, and Miss Nelly Moore. The last-named fascinating actress was at that time one of the greatest favourites on the London stage.

It was in connection with this play that Charles Dickens spoke with enthusiasm of "a young fellow who sits at table and is bullied by Sam Emery ; his name is Henry Irving, and if that young man does not one day come out as a great actor I know nothing of art."

Byron was a great believer in his *Lancashire Lass*, and a little later on played in it himself in provincial towns. Two little anecdotes that came under my notice when he brought his company to Birmingham are so characteristic of his ready wit that I cannot refrain from

recalling them. At that time he was turning out burlesques as quickly as he did comedies, and he wrote in days when audiences delighted in the now despised pun. His word-twistings may have been outrageous, but they were ever harmlessly mirth-provoking, and they used to make us roar with laughter. Even those who would nowadays condemn them as "old-fashioned" would have to admit their ingenuity.

Among those who supported him on this tour in *The Lancashire Lass*, and other plays from his own pen, was that excellent comedian, Arthur Wood, who on one occasion rejected a minor part that he had previously accepted. When Byron heard this from the lips of the irate stage manager he bottled up his feeling of annoyance and said laconically, "Oh!—I see;—first Arthur Wood—then Arthur *wouldn't*."

It was during his Birmingham week that, dining at the house of one of our mutual friends, he was somewhat rallied on his partiality for the already moribund pun. "Well," he said, "I want them for my burlesques, and I have so trained myself to make them that I almost see the pun before I write the word that I want it to play upon. I don't suppose that anyone at this table could give me a name or a word that I could not, through long habit, twist into something."

One of the guests, who had never met him before, thought to set him a poser by suggesting the name of the famous Birmingham steel-pen maker, Gillott, a name, by the way, that is properly pronounced with a soft *G* instead of the hard and, in this case, incorrect *G* so often used.

Byron did not hesitate for a second. "What!" he said, with a quiet smile, and in the voice of a man who felt he was being trifled with, "you don't mean to tell me that it needs any *agility* to do that?" He really seemed pained that he had not been asked a more difficult question.

In May, 1869, Charles Wyndham appeared at the Queen's Theatre in an adaptation from the French of Victorien Sardou entitled, *Seraphine*. His companions in this were Hermann Vezin, George Rignold, Sam Emery, Miss Herbert, Miss Henrietta Hodson, and Miss Patti Josephs.

I write and think very lovingly of the happy evenings I spent at that now half-forgotten Long Acre playhouse. In those days I was quite a young playgoer, living for a goodly portion of the year a rather lonely life in London rooms in that Cecil Street which has been obliterated by the Hotel Cecil, and my great delight was to watch my favourite actors—foremost among them were Henry Irving, Charles Wyndham, and Lionel Brough—in all their impersonations, and that not once, but over and over again. To spend an evening in their good company at the Queen's Theatre, and then to finish up with a fried chop or a couple of grilled kidneys at Evans's famous supper-rooms, or at the Albion, hard by historic "Old Drury," was to me the height of bliss, and to my intense joy it sometimes happened that in those midnight haunts I caught sight of the actors who had just fascinated me on the stage.

How little I thought then that the whirligig of time would throw me into such close touch with them all—

that I should number them amongst my dear friends and live to chronicle their doings!

Primitive playgoing and supping it may have been, and no doubt the immaculate young patrons of the luxurious theatres of the twentieth century would be intensely bored by it; but I would far rather live one of those simple evenings (when I certainly saw acting at its best) over again than listen to all the gorgeously staged, aimlessly jingling musical comedies of to-day put together, and sup on the united efforts of the eminent *chefs* of the Carlton and Savoy hotels. There was an appeal to the emotions in the playhouse then that seems to be either missing or not wanted in too many of the Thespian temples of to-day.

Having firmly established a first-class reputation on London boards, Charles Wyndham, with characteristic courage and energy, bethought himself once more of America, and, being anxious to efface the memory of what he considered to be his "failures" in that country, recrossed the Atlantic in the August of 1869, and in September "opened," as the theatrical phrase has it, at Wallack's Theatre, New York, as Charles Surface in an important revival of *The School for Scandal*, a part in which he has remained for so many years without a rival.

I wonder if many people realise what a very difficult character this is to portray? Amateurs, bearded, whiskered, or moustached—and sometimes all three—forgetting or ignoring the mode of the period they are supposed to be living in, content to put on an ill-fitting white wig, with their own hair showing beneath the

back of it, attack it boldly—and (if they have taken the trouble to master the text, which they seldom do) rattle through it as if it were slapdash farce. But this is not the treatment which Charles Surface requires. In manner, truly, he should appear to be as light as swans-down, and yet he must really be as incisive as his sanctimonious brother Joseph; for the glorious lines of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, each one of them instinct with meaning, must not be pattered through as if they belonged to some ephemeral production which, having served its purpose, is cast on one side and forgotten.

It is a rare gift to be able to convey with this requisite buoyancy of manner the underlying affection, strength, and even good-natured shrewdness of the character; but Charles Wyndham, having coupled natural gifts to constant study, has always been able to strike the balance to a nicety. Hence he is an ideal Charles Surface, while as to his appearance he might have stepped from a canvas of Sir Joshua Reynolds, a George Romney, or a Thomas Gainsborough. If you watch the methods of this admirable actor, you will find that while apparently impulsive he is always minutely careful. A short time ago my kind friend and near neighbour, Madame de Navarro, the popular Mary Anderson of a few years ago, and who (if she did not love the sweet retirement of the old-world Worcestershire village lying snugly at the spur of those Cotswold Hills, well known, well loved, and immortalised by Shakespeare, in which she lives, too well to leave it) might be the popular Mary Anderson of to-day, told

me this little anecdote of the great American comedian, Joseph Jefferson :—

Jefferson in a certain scene of one of his most important parts wore gloves, and extracted a certain amount of effective business from the manner in which, while carrying on a conversation, he took them off. "On nights when I was a little nervous," he said (in common with all our best actors this past master of his art confesses to nervousness), "I deliberately stripped finger after finger, counting as I did so by those fingers the words I had to say. But on occasions when I became impassioned I tore off the whole glove at once—though even in my moments of warmest enthusiasm I never forgot the rules that my finger lessons had laid down for me." That, I think, describes the precision and consequently excellent effect of Charles Wyndham's style of acting. Always impetuous, the gloves are quickly made away with, but that accurate tick-tick of the fingers is never forgotten. Method, and the cultivated genius that bears fruit, generally walk hand in hand.

To return for a moment to our delightfully confident friends the amateurs, and their extraordinary love for appearing in the difficult costume plays in which they cannot show to advantage, shall I ever forget a performance of *The School for Scandal* which took place at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, more than thirty-five years ago? It was an ambitious effort. To give glamour to the evening's entertainment poor Edward Askew Sotherton, then in the heyday of his success as Lord Dundreary, was engaged to play Charles Surface,

and Mrs. Kendal, then Miss Madge Robertson and a girl in her 'teens, was the Lady Teazle. Hers was an ideal impersonation. Sweet to look upon, speaking with the tender yet direct voice that playgoers long ago learnt to love, acting with consummate grace added to the traditions of the character taught her by her father, she left nothing to be desired. Sothern, too, promised to be a most admirable Charles Surface, but seeing his opportunity among the easily gulled amateurs, he gave full vein to his extraordinary propensity for practical joking.

One by one as they came off the stage, after floundering through scenes that under any circumstances would have been beyond their powers to depict, he took them apart, told them that he had never seen such *remarkable* acting (in one way that may have been true, but not after the manner suggested by this arch-lover of mischief), and offered one and all extravagant salaries—"subject to manager J. B. Buckstone's approval—which was a mere matter of form, my dear fellow"—to appear with him next season at the Haymarket. "But," he added, privately and confidentially to each one of them, "I must beg of you to 'speak up' a little more. No doubt your friends in the stalls hear you, but we must do our duty to the gallery sixpences as well as to those who can indulge in expensive seats."

Now, to tell the truth, the amateurs, anxious to do justice to the unaccustomed space of a large theatre, had been too noisy. If it had not been so, Sothern would never have conceived this jest.

Possibly cognisant of this fact, one of the flattered

amateurs said, "But, Mr. Sothern, we are all speaking as loudly as you and Miss Robertson do, and it's quite evident from the way in which the gallery gods take your points that you make yourselves heard."

"Yes," said Sothern very seriously, "but Miss Robertson and I have stage training. We *seem* to be speaking quietly and naturally, but, as a matter of fact, we are much louder than any of you. When you come to me at the Haymarket I will teach you the trick. In the meantime I can only implore you to 'speak up.'"

Thus encouraged by the most popular actor of his day, the amateurs "spoke up" to such an extent that in the last act they were, by reason of their gallant exertions, almost inaudible; and at curtain-fall Sothern told his hoarse friends, one by one, that admirably as he had acted, he could not give him that engagement at the Haymarket because of the lack of staying-power in his voice.

Poor Mrs. Kendal! She has often spoken to me of that evening's perplexities. Her kindly heart prompted her to do all in her power to assist the amateurs; her keen sense of humour kept her from being righteously indignant with the errant Sothern. Happily, her winsome impersonation of Lady Teazle carried the performance — in spite of all drawbacks — shoulder-high to success.

Having easily won the hearts of New York audiences by his irresistible impersonation of Charles Surface (it remains as good to-day as it was then), Charles Wyndham, who, like Macbeth, had now won "golden opinions from all sorts of people," remained at Wallack's Theatre

throughout that season, and in the May of 1870 he started a tour on his own account in partnership with Miss Louisa Moore, an excellent actress who had already made her name in London.

One of the attractions of this venture was his performance of Jelicœur, in *The Lancers*, an adaptation of the French *Un Fils de Famille*, better known perhaps to English playgoers of to-day as *The Queen's Shilling*, and with which in 1879 the Kendals and John Hare closed the old Court Theatre in Sloane Square and opened their famous career at the St. James's Theatre.

But of course there were many other pieces in the brave little American touring company's repertory, and I cull the following interesting paragraph from the Christmas number of the *New York Dramatic Mirror* of 1903. It appeared in an article called "The Chicago Stage before the Fire."

"Among the attractions was the Wyndham Comedy Company in the Robertson *répertoire*, of which *Caste* was perhaps the most notable bill, with Charles Wyndham as Hawtree, J. J. Fitzpatrick as George D'Alroy, Belvil Ryan as Eccles, George Giddens as Sam Gerridge, Louisa Moore¹ as Esther, Sydney Cowell as Polly, and Mrs. Wright as the Marchioness."

Charles Wyndham opened in Chicago the first month of the year of that city's destruction by fire, 1871. The

¹ In the article it said "Mary Moore as Esther," a mistake which, by the courtesy of the editor, I was permitted to set right. Miss Mary Moore has taken part in all the latter-day Wyndham successes, but in 1870 she was a mere child. It is interesting to note how early George Giddens served under the banner of his long-time London manager.

only place he could get into was Crosby's Opera House, a very magnificent building, almost as big as Drury Lane, but not the very best area for light comedy. As the audience was significantly small for the advent of the stranger, the size of that audience and the size of the house were out of all decent proportion. When Tuesday arrived the Press were most unanimous in their praises of both himself and his company.

Delighted, and even surprised at this, he concluded at once that with such a unanimous chorus of praise they were bound to have even that great house full that night, but unfortunately there was no improvement in the number of spectators. The actor-manager regarded the matter philosophically, but was much distressed next morning on taking up the papers to see in all of them the expression of surprise and regret on the part of the Press at the poverty of the attendance. He would rather have "kept that quiet," so that Tuesday morning's wonderful notices should have had time to percolate through the artistic centres of Chicago, whereas the publication of the news that the house was bad would certainly prejudice the attendance on the Wednesday night. He was quite right. Wednesday showed no improvement on Tuesday, and he was annoyed beyond measure on taking up the papers on Thursday to find a repetition of their surprise and regret still more forcibly emphasised to the Chicago public, and still unpleasantly more to himself. Thursday night's attendance was just the same, and Friday morning's press even more than the same, for now they began to blame the public for neglecting the attraction there was in the town. This

unusual step, however, had no influence on Friday night's house. The Chicago public were not to be moved, but Charles Wyndham had this solatium in his bitter disappointment and heavy pecuniary loss, that the manager tried to persuade him on the Friday morning to stay another week, as he was sure that this repeated attack on the public by the Press would have its effect. Alas! he was due at St. Louis the following Monday; but a few hours after the manager had spoken to him a strange coincidence occurred. He received a telegram from the manager at St. Louis telling him that Mrs. Oates, a lady star in America at that time, had lost one of her weeks in St. Louis through the floods and consequent breakdown of her train, and he very much wished her to have her second week, and if he would forego the next week he would give him the following two in their place. As the week in question was Holy Week, and the weeks following Easter and its successor, in a Roman Catholic city, he was only too glad to accept the change, and notified his Chicago manager to that effect. He quaked with fear when not even a Saturday performance resulted in anything like a remunerative house. But a strange thing happened on the Sunday morning. In the previous year the intrepid Miss Lydia Thompson had publicly thrashed the proprietor of the *Chicago Times*, and inasmuch as the manager of the Crosby Opera House had sided with Miss Thompson, the *Chicago Times* had, since that date, during the whole twelve months refrained from even mentioning the theatre or anybody connected with it. It was a matter of great public talk during the whole of

that year, and the surprise of the Chicago public when, on the Sunday morning, they found in the *Chicago Times* a couple of columns of high praise, equal to that of the other papers on the Wyndham Company's performances, can be realised. It was due to this: the manager happened to meet the editor of the paper quite accidentally on the Saturday, and under such psychological conditions that they quietly made up their differences, with the result that the editor had come on the Saturday night and gone into line with all the rest of the Press. This had a most wonderful effect for Charles Wyndham. From Monday onwards the houses were very fine, till towards the end of the week that vast theatre was crammed to its utmost capacity, and on Saturday evening he had every manager in Chicago waiting behind the scenes for him begging him to come back in May. The Crosby Opera House in the hot month of May was out of the question to his mind, and to the surprise of everybody he selected the very smallest theatre in Chicago. A friend pointed to the enormous house of that Saturday evening and said, "This is what you could get, and yet you take the very smallest!" His forecast was right, however. He opened in May at the Deerborn Street Theatre, and turned money away for three months. Then he arranged to return to his allegiance to the Crosby Opera House for the autumn.

The owner was going to decorate it in the most sumptuous manner possible. As a matter of fact, the decorations cost sixteen thousand pounds. Charles Wyndham was to open the theatre for a three months'

season. Chicago never saw that beautiful opera house. The night before it was to be opened was the night of the Chicago fire, and this magnificent structure crumbled and melted away in nine minutes, not leaving a single brick or column standing on the ground. The proprietor stood in front watching this terrible destruction, and at the end of the nine minutes simply turned round to one of his friends and ejaculated, "I would not have minded the loss of the building if Chicago had only seen it once!" To Charles Wyndham the effect was highly disastrous, in a degree as much so as to the proprietor, for he had strengthened his company with English representative actors—a very fine organisation indeed—and found himself stranded with obligations towards them for an entire season and no theatre to put them into! The only playhouses that were unlet were "detrimentals," halls in the villages and smallest of towns. He opened a Chicago theatre a fortnight after the fire, but it was only a "fit-up" in a large room in the German club—very sorry accommodation for a first-class company. Chicago, however, was energetic. For example, the *Chicago Tribune*, while their magnificent and costly building was being burnt down, immediately sent over to an unburnt district, bought an old discarded printing machine, and actually—that very same afternoon—brought out their paper as usual, reporting, hour by hour, the progress of the fire. In the same spirit a gentleman came to Charles Wyndham and asked him if he would open a new regularly built theatre. When he asked him when he thought he could get it ready, expecting

him to say in about nine months at least, he paralysed him by telling him that it would be ready in a month. He took him over to the site of it. There was a two-storied house standing at that time, fully occupied !—all the people in it carrying on their duties as usual. He was ready within one week of the projected time, and in five weeks Charles Wyndham opened a regularly appointed theatre, the two-storied house having been carted away to another street without taking anything or anybody out of it. In order, however, to take up this engagement he had to split his company up into two, inasmuch as he had been engaged to play in another town two hundred miles away; so he used to play in Chicago one evening and in the other town the next, then back again to Chicago, and so on. He thought he was meeting an adverse fate very well; but soon the two towns began to ask themselves where he was really playing, and it led to such a correspondence that he was at last obliged to amalgamate his two companies as soon as he could and bear the loss during the whole season, which he did. He was playing at the time with one company at Detroit, while the other half was playing in Savannah, under the management of George Giddens. It took from Detroit to Savannah four days and nights railway journey in those days, and the first thing that confronted him on his arrival was a bill poster with this extraordinary announcement: "Last nights of the Wyndham Comedy Company by general request." This, of course, was just a question of a full stop being substituted for a comma. The "general request" referred to the piece about to be

played ; but George Giddens did not escape chaffing for a long time for his unhappy period.

Speaking of American touring in the opening years of the seventies, Charles Wyndham admits that he learnt much, and saw many interesting things, but found transatlantic audiences much less educated than they are now. This was particularly so in the West, where travelling, as we have seen, with his own company, he had some fairly hard experiences. The Far Westerner of those days did not care to sup on the refined comedies and more or less emotional plays that formed his excellent repertory, but liked to have everything very strongly emphasised and highly coloured. Once he and his companions were acting in a town in Ohio, which was then regarded as quite a Western State. On the morning following the performance the rowdies of the place mobbed the unfortunate members of the company in the street. "Give us our money back !" they shouted. "What !—do you call *that* acting ? You just sit about in chairs in the same kind of clothes as you go out in. Give us our money back !"

"The West," says the once distracted manager of this venture, "had most decidedly to be educated up to the point of appreciating the quiet comedy of sentiment."

He never altered his methods, nor swerved from the sound lines he had laid down for himself and his followers, and it is satisfactory to know that whenever he can find time to revisit his sometime recalcitrant friends in the Far West, he is received with enthusiasm.

In addition to these irritations, the facilities and comforts provided thirty-five years ago for travelling actors in the States were by no means what they are now. The journeys were much more fatiguing, and in every way things theatrical were dealt with in rougher fashion.

And although he had the perennial *Caste* in his repertory, and did every justice to the finely conceived, Thackeray-like character of Hawtree, he maintains that, with the exception of this very play, there is no comparison between the plays that were then at his disposal and those that are written and produced in these later days. The dramatic work of the present time, he declares, has infinitely more "brains" in it. It is not merely that pieces are mounted better, though, of course, no one would think now of producing them after the somewhat meagre way in which many were staged in the days when he first became an actor. Quite apart from the setting, he thinks that the work of our present playwrights is more thoroughly thought out, that their characters are more consistent, and their productions altogether better than they used to be.

In these days, when some excellent people would have us believe that our stage is moribund by reason of a lack of competent dramatists, it is satisfactory to know that at least one notable actor-manager is able to take this roseate view of things.

But these early experiences of our comedian, which I have endeavoured to describe, have taught him to say to the ever-growing army of stage aspirants, "Never become an actor if you can help it. Never go on the

stage unless you feel you must. If (he advises) it is the lights and the music, and the applause and the publicity that attract you, keep away ; for the lights will fade and the music die out, and you will sink down to the condition of a third-class player, wanted by no one. But, on the other hand, if you feel that you must act, if you find within yourself a deep purpose that impels you, if you are ready for hard work, for disappointment, then come and try. None should come but he or she who cannot but come. It is easy enough to get on to the stage after a way. If you have a good presence and can speak well, then it is easy enough to get a part. But that will not make you an actor. An actor, as I understand it, is one who touches the emotions, the hearts of his audiences. He is an artist who paints, not on canvas, but on nerves. If he is to do anything he must give himself to constant work to perfect himself in every detail of his art."

He is certain that the only way to avoid being stagey is to practise constantly. When he was a young actor he strove hard to be as natural as possible in his impersonations, and to avoid all staginess he practised for hours at a time before a looking-glass. Every emotion was gone through again and over and over again, the slightest bit of by-play rehearsed incessantly. According to his ideas it is the only means by which anything really good in the way of true acting can be done. Such were the lessons imprinted on the mind of our actor-knight during his early efforts to make a name for himself in England and America. Having well won his spurs on both sides of the Atlantic, he returned to England in

1872, full of keen desire to make full use of those opportunities that were now well within his reach. Those who have studied his consummate art will know how the theories of his younger days became the practice of his subsequent triumphant career.

CHAPTER III

CHIEFLY CONCERNING *BRIGHTON*

CHARLES WYNDHAM'S first reappearance in London was at his old home, the St. James's Theatre, and there he had the heartiest of welcomes—though the part allotted to him in Mr. Stephen Fiske's comedy (produced on February 25th, 1873), entitled *Robert Rabagas*, could not add much to his now well-established reputation.

His next step was to accept an engagement to appear during an English provincial tour as Geoffrey Delamayn, the hero of the four-act drama by Wilkie Collins called *Man and Wife*, which had just been produced by the Bancrofts with the greatest success at the then famous little Prince of Wales's Theatre in Tottenham Street. In connection with the first night of this piece there hangs a tale that should be taken to heart by over-confident young dramatists. In the interesting Bancroft memoirs the popular actor-manager of bygone days tells us how Wilkie Collins, the famous author of *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone*, and many more of the most eagerly read novels of their day—Wilkie Collins, who had already made his name as a playwright, not only on his own account, but as collaborator with

Charles Dickens—passed almost all the evening in the actor's dressing-room in a state of nervous terror painful to behold—though his sufferings were assuaged occasionally by loud bursts of applause, which fortunately were just within earshot. Only for one brief moment did he see the stage that night, until he was summoned by the brilliant audience to show himself, and to receive their plaudits at the end of the play.

Here is one more proof that the cleverest of men—ay, and the bravest of men—are often the most modest and nervous of men.

Most of us remember that characteristic anecdote of the "Iron" Duke of Wellington, whose attention was called to a trembling, timorous-looking soldier marching on to the battlefield. "Look at that coward!" said his companion contemptuously. "Pardon me," said the Duke, "he's no coward. He knows his *danger*, but he is *facing it*!"

The country tour of *Man and Wife* was organised by the Bancrofts, and they showed their usual discernment in securing the services of Charles Wyndham for the powerfully but curiously conceived character of Geoffrey Delamayn, a part in which Charles Coghlan had made a deep impression in London. Other members of the touring company were the handsome Harry B. Conway, then at the threshold of a career that promised to be, and should have been, a triumphant one; Charles Collette, the still deservedly popular comedian; his wife, Miss Blanche Wilton, the sister of the gifted lady who was first known as Miss Marie Wilton, then as Mrs.

Bancroft, and now as Lady Bancroft; and Miss Ada Dyas, who, clever in all she did, made an admirable Anne Silvester.

It was in the last-named part that the charming American actress, Miss Clara Morris, made one of her first great successes. At the time of the production in New York she and her mother were very poor, and the two depended entirely on the then scanty earnings of the young artist. Imagine, then, the joy with which the poor, nervous creature recorded :—

“At last, and late, far too late, the play ended in a blaze of glory. The curtain was raised for final compliments. All the actors in the play had been summoned. We all stood in a line—a bowing, smiling, happy line—facing a shouting, hat, handkerchief, or cane-waving crowd of pleased, excited people. As I saw how many eyes were turned my way, with a leap of the heart I repeated : ‘If you make a favourable impression, I will—yes, I will double that salary.’”¹

Then, describing her midnight return to her dreary lodgings, her anxious mother, and her pet dog, she says :—

“At last I saw the lighted windows that told me home was near. Then up the stairs, where there bounded upon my breast the little black-and-tan bundle of love and devotion called “Bertie,” whose fervid greetings made the removal of my hat so difficult a job that it was through the tangle of hat, veil, and wriggling dog I cried at last : ‘It’s all right, Mumsey

¹ A promise made by her manager, Mr. Augustin Daly, which he no doubt kept.

—a success ! Lots and lots of “calls,” dear, and oh ! is there anything to eat ?—*I am so hungry !*”

“So while the new actress’s name was floating over many a dainty restaurant supper, its owner sat beneath one gas-jet, between mother and pet, eating a large piece of bread and a small piece of cheese ; and, thankful for both, she talked to her small circle of admirers, telling them all about it, and winding up supper and talk with the declaration : ‘Mother, I believe the hearts are just the same, whether they beat against Western ribs or Eastern ribs.’¹

“Then, supper over, I stumbled through my old-time ‘Now I lay me,’ and adding some blurred words of gratitude (God must be so well used to sleepy thanks, but very wide-awake entreaties !), I fell asleep, knowing that through God’s mercy and my own hard work I was the first Western actress who had ever been accepted by a New York audience ; and as I drowsed off, I murmured to myself : ‘And I’ll leave the door open, now that I have opened it—I’ll leave it open for all others.’”

I am induced to interpolate this touching little story, because it gives one of those interesting peeps behind the scenes that hypercritical and impatient first-night audiences would do well to bear in mind when they reflect (as in their calmer moments they must, I should think, do) that their applause or its grim reverse may make or mar the fortunes of the anxious and sometimes needy artists who are doing their best under a very

¹ Miss Clara Morris gained her early experiences in Western America.

trying ordeal. It is, moreover, a true example of the unselfish desire of our best actors and actresses to give, in the moments of their own triumphs, a helping hand to those who are endeavouring to toil after them up the steep and often slippery ladder that leads to fame.

In such beneficent work, as I shall presently show, Charles Wyndham has ever been in the van of the theatrical army.

Having by his admirable acting in the Wilkie Collins play conquered the English provincial towns, he returned to London, and once more rejoined the forces of the little Royalty Theatre, which was then under the management of his former Queen's Theatre comrade, Miss Henrietta Hodson.

Opening there in October, 1873, he made a decided hit as Rolando, in Tobin's once favourite comedy, *The Honeymoon*. The cast was an excellent one. Miss Henrietta Hodson played Juliana; Miss Augusta Wilton (another of Lady Bancroft's sisters), Zamora; Miss Maggie Brennan, Volante; and John Clarke, one of the best comedians of his day, and destined to do notable work under Charles Wyndham's management, the Jacques. I have called it the "once favourite" comedy advisedly, for I fear if revived to-day, the poor *Honeymoon* would have very short shrift. Of this production of 1873 a very prominent critic, while praising the acting, said: "This piece, which is a strange combination of *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Philaster*, *Rule a Wife*, and other well-known plays, is ingenious in the manner in which the incidents are woven together, and

excellent in language. Hearing its speeches, which are, like tinsel, better for stage effect than gold, one is inclined to wonder it has been handed over entirely to amateurs."

But as it was then, so it is now. A little later, the Kendals, on the first provincial tour they took on their own account, tried to galvanise the old play into life, but it was a vain experiment, and except for the staunch amateurs, who think that their all too obvious tinsel is virgin gold, *The Honeymoon* would be forgotten.

If the critic whose words I have quoted had delved a little deeper after the sources of *The Honeymoon*, and all plays founded on the same theme, he would, I think, have found it in an old German legend which the learned and excellent MM. Grimm incorporated in their invaluable tales of folk and fairy lore under the title of *König Drosselbart*. This came from Hesse, the Main, and Paderborn. An English version of the Grimm story, by Edgar Taylor, exists, and is called *King Grizzle-Beard*. It is odd to think that the plot of our English Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* was possibly "made in Germany"!

At the Royalty, in October, 1873, *The Honeymoon* was followed by *The Realm of Joy*, by F. Latour Tomline, a name occasionally assumed by W. S. Gilbert. It was a free-and-easy version of *Le Roi Candaule*, by MM. Meilhac and Halevy, and was supposed to be a skit on the objections which the examiner of plays had raised against Gilbert's *The Happy Land*, which was in its turn a burlesque on his own charming fairy-comedy, *The Wicked World*.

Of this production my *Honeymoon* critic said :—

“Though a clever and amusing farce, the fun of which, well kept up by Messrs. Clarke, Wyndham, Miss Brennan, and Miss Wilton, told with the audience, the whole at the conclusion missed fire. A promise of some fun levelled at existing authorities excited public curiosity. Our prudent censor had, however, with excessive caution, cut out everything that could tickle the public palate, and the audience, defrauded as it felt itself of a promised amusement, when it had ceased to laugh commenced to hiss. There is a lesson in this for managements, if they are wise enough to take it, that is, not to stimulate overmuch public appetite unless you are sure of having wherewithal to satisfy it.”

On this occasion “Latour Tomline” was certainly hoist with his own petard, and that uncomfortable examiner of plays was master of the situation. In December, 1873, Charles Wyndham was able to fulfil a very early ambition by appearing as Rover, in *Wild Oats*.

When he was quite young he had seen Samuel Phelps play the breezy, apparently reckless, yet sound-hearted character of O’Keefe’s hero, and his soul yearned to follow in his footsteps.

Of his zeal in this direction he says : “I made up my mind to do it. I had £30, and meeting another young fellow with a similar sum, we began to negotiate for the Strand Theatre, then under the management of Mr. Payne. But our hopes were crushed, as a slight barrier cropped up in the way of expenses. Payne wanted £60 a week rent and three months in advance” ; and so this ambitious project fell through.

At the Royalty Theatre Charles Wyndham acquitted himself bravely as Rover, little thinking that at the then undreamt-of Criterion Theatre the part would make a curious and important turning-point in his career.

Just as Rover, the strolling player (an ancestor surely of one Jingle of immortal memory?), met Harry Thunder in the first scene of *Wild Oats* in which he appears, and the two genial but apparently badly assorted boon-companions, but true friends, agree to separate at the cross-roads, so did Charles Wyndham in due time, and with the gallant Rover for his pilot, make a new departure that, well as he had graced the character before, became one of infinite value to the English stage.

But as the old melodramatists were wont to say, "more of this anon."

At this time a thing happened that for many years decided the course of the actor's career. The fame of an American play called *Saratoga* had reached England. It was said to contain the best part for a light comedian (a wonderful and intensified "Charles Mathews part") that had ever been written. Many English actors were anxious to obtain the piece, foremost among them being E. A. Sothorn, who was, I remember, greatly disappointed when he found it had been secured by Charles Wyndham.

My kind friend Bronson Howard, the author of this epoch-making production, has given me the following interesting account of it :—

"*Saratoga*," he tells me, "was first produced in New

York, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, then under the able management of Augustin Daly, in the December of 1870. It was the first original play of its author, and his first play in New York. Judged by the after celebrity won by its actors, the original cast was one of the most remarkable known in the history of the American stage, including as it did James Lewis, Daniel Hawkins, William Davidge, Mrs. Gilbert, Miss Clara Morris, Miss Fanny Davenport, Miss Kate Claxton, and Miss Linda Dietz. A few of them were afterwards well known in England as members of the admirable Augustin Daly Company, and quaint James Lewis and delightful Mrs. Gilbert became immense favourites with English audiences ; but Miss Clara Morris and Miss Fanny Davenport, who were among the most celebrated American actresses of the first rank, have unfortunately never visited this country. Miss Kate Claxton made one of her greatest successes as the Blind Girl in *The Two Orphans*, a part which she has played on and off (and is still playing) in America during a period of thirty-three years. Miss Linda Dietz will be remembered as a charming actress who did excellent work with E. A. Sothorn."

Saratoga still holds American boards, both on tour and in the stock companies scattered over the country. Having been fortunate enough to secure certain rights in it, Charles Wyndham played it in almost all parts of the United States, and it was one of the items in his repertory when his engagement was broken up at Chicago by the great fire of 1871.

Impressed by his success in his new venture, he then

divided his company ; sending one half on tour with his usual round of pieces, and retaining *Saratoga* for himself, and playing it continuously until his return to England.

Certain features in the play were so peculiarly American that it was thought well that for the "old country" an English version of it should be made. This task was entrusted to the late Frank Marshall : *Saratoga* became *Brighton*, and the piece was produced at the old Court Theatre, Sloane Square (then under the management of charming Miss Marie Litton), on May 25th, 1874.

The piece, and Charles Wyndham, made an instantaneous success. There was something delightfully new and exhilarating in it. Charles Mathews, E. A. Sothern, and one or two more had made us ache with laughter in their light comedy characters in the good old one-act farces of the Maddison Morton type, but it remained for Bronson Howard and Charles Wyndham to show that the spirit of the thing could be maintained throughout three acts in a perfectly intelligible and quite interesting play. *Brighton* was, in fact, the pioneer of the three-act farces that have, ever since its signal success, deluged the English stage.

Though ridiculous, the subject of the play had a fascination of its own, and the apparently hopeless difficulties of the breezy, light-hearted, but much too susceptible hero had in them, thanks to the exquisitely refined acting of Charles Wyndham, a certain curious blend of pathos. Bob Sackett was the most reprehensible of love-makers, and should have reproached

himself for the scrapes in which he found himself ; but owing to the clever touch and magnetism of the actor his audiences liked him and wished him well.

Concerning the production at the Court Theatre an eminent critic said :—

“ In one of his fluent and now almost forgotten lyrics, Tom Moore advances the convenient maxim that—

“ ‘ When we are far from the lips that we love,
We have but to make love to the lips that are near.’

“ This teaching, we can scarcely call it a moral, is supported by *Brighton*. Every woman of moderate attractions whom the hero meets establishes a hold upon his imagination and his heart, which prompts him instantly to make proffer of his hand and his fortune. Being young, good-looking, and rich, his advances are seldom rejected. He becomes, accordingly, entangled in a manner which leaves but little chance of escape. When, obeying the imperative dictates of fashion, the whole company of women go to Brighton at the same time, and there meet the faithless lover, he has scarcely a good time of it. Many comic situations arrive, and much laughter is evoked. The hero is then let off better than he deserves.”

Yes, that is true—better than he deserves, but during the three hours’ traffic of the stage he has kept us in such roars of wholesome, health-giving laughter, that, being grateful to him, we learn to love him, and rejoice in his good fortune.

Such was the success of *Brighton*, and, apart from the excellence of the play, it was mainly due to the personality of Charles Wyndham.

But of his acting of an extremely difficult part the originator of the play should be the best judge, and I will again quote Bronson Howard.

"Charles Wyndham," he tells me, "emphasised one idea, almost, I might say, created it—for while it was inherent in the character the author had neglected it, and almost destroyed it by a line or two. In Bob Sackett he persisted in showing him as 'never a flirt'—always intensely in earnest when expressing his love, and always really sincere when thinking of each particular woman he is interested in. He is seriously and honestly in love with one woman at a time, and only one—the one he happens to be thinking of—and never has the slightest intention of trifling with her. This, probably, is the greatest charm, as it is the greatest novelty of Wyndham's Bob Sackett."

No doubt this is true. This intense earnestness, sustained during the most comic situations, in which the bachelor Blue-Beard "Bob" trembles on the edge of perilous precipices, was the true art that made its way home to the hearts of his audiences.

It is not often that a dramatist cares for his work to be patched and altered by another hand, but Bronson Howard speaks very generously of the part Frank Marshall took in converting *Saratoga* into *Brighton*.

"In the English version," he writes me, "much of the dialogue was original with Mr. Marshall, and very bright and telling it was, taking the place of talk which belonged only to American life and manners. The characters were but little changed, and though the piece

was reduced from five to four acts, the general construction remained the same. An interesting thing about the characters is this. The girls of the cast were suggested to the author by Mrs. Lynn Linton's series of articles called, *The Girls of the Period*, and when the play was first presented in America, in 1870, were considered too advanced and rapid for toleration on the stage. Indeed, the play had been declined on these grounds by Mr. Selwyn in Boston, and by the celebrated Laura Keene, the great *comédienne*, then managing a theatre in Philadelphia. They both objected to the fastness of the girls. Selwyn said that he would not allow such girls on his stage; and Laura Keene, while praising the comedy, said she dare not produce it. She had just been scored unmercifully by the critics for the rapid girls in a previous piece, and they were mild compared with those of *Saratoga*. It was on account of this objection by Miss Keene that Augustin Daly accepted the piece for New York. This will illustrate differences between New York and its demure neighbours Boston and Philadelphia—a difference almost as marked to this day. But the most astounding contrast is this—and it is one to make us think very actively: A few weeks ago,¹ when *Saratoga* was reproduced for a tour, the girls seemed only mild reproductions of the average, ordinary girl of this period—thirty-three years after; and the only modernising suggested to the author by the anxious manager was, 'Put a little more ginger into the girls.' How is this for the new woman of the twentieth century in her teens? What can a present-

¹ This letter was written in the late months of 1903.

day Mrs. Lynn Linton say about 'The Girls of the Period?'"

Truly during those thirty-three years our young ladies—or, at least, some of them—have made very rapid and much to be deplored advances.

Among those supporting Charles Wyndham in the original production of *Brighton* at the Court Theatre were Edgar Bruce, W. J. Hill, Alfred Bishop, Miss Sylvia Hodson, Miss Rose Egan, and Miss De Grey.

It is curious to read to-day, when poor, infinitely droll W. J. Hill has long since passed away, the pronouncement that "This young actor promises to be one of the best low comedians our stage has recently seen." Happily he lived long enough to amply fulfil the prophecy.

Brighton ran for a year at the Court Theatre, and during that period Charles Wyndham, not content with the very arduous part of Bob Sackett, undertook the management of a long series of dramatic performances at the Crystal Palace, which became very justly celebrated on account of the excellence of the casts, which were culled from the best players of every theatre in London.

In this remarkable and very popular enterprise he aimed at everything, and it may fairly be said that all his efforts were crowned with success.

It would be impossible for me to give any list of this voluminous series of performances, which extended over some years, and, to the energetic manager, must have entailed a vast amount of labour; but I should like

to recall one very pleasant afternoon on which he revived T. W. Robertson's *Progress*. On the occasion of its original production, on September 18th, 1869, at the Globe Theatre, the cast included such capable actors as Henry Neville, John Billington, Charles Collette, John Clarke, Miss Lydia Foote, and Mrs. Stephens; the comedy (which was an adaptation of Victorien Sardou's *Les Ganaches*) failed to achieve prolonged popularity, and when I saw it at Sydenham I could not help feeling what a pity it was that it had so soon been forgotten. Certainly, in those days I had never seen Charles Wyndham do anything so fine as his rendering of Henry Neville's original character—John Ferne. At that time he was making the town roar with laughter in rollicking farce, and people had begun to associate him absolutely with that class of entertainment. It was, therefore, a revelation to see his deeply impressive impersonation of a difficult part, written on strong dramatic lines. He was capably supported, too, by a company that included Harry Paulton, Edgar Bruce, Henry Ashley, and Miss Eastlake.

In connection with *Progress* there is rather a droll story. Robertson, who never forgave Buckstone's contemptuous refusal of *Society*, had, in the days of his well-won fame, expressly written the Sardou adaptation for him and the then somewhat mature Haymarket players. "Good Lord!" said Buckstone when he had read it, "they're all *old* people in it." "Certainly," said Robertson, who never could resist the retort that came so readily to his quick tongue, "*I've written a play for your company!*" This made the old comedian very

angry, and he would have nothing to do with *Progress* at the Haymarket.

Of the Crystal Palace entertainments my kind friend Miss Geneviève Ward has told me the following humorous and characteristic little incident.

In order to give her scope for her transcendent tragic powers, Charles Wyndham boldly produced the rarely seen Greek play, *Antigone*. In one of the scenes there is a silent soldier who has some important "stage business" with the heroine, and any awkwardness on his part might prove fatal to her chances of success. As he had nothing to say, this character had been allotted to a mere "super," a man of no experience, and utterly incapable of doing what was required of him. In despair Miss Ward went to her manager and demanded an "actor" for the part. No one was available. "But," said Charles Wyndham, "though Greek tragedy is not my *forte*, I will try to be a classic myself for once, and save the situation." And he did!—though no one knew that the Greek soldier's garb hid the personality of breezy Bob Sackett.

Brighton ran its course at the Court Theatre, and was then transferred to the St. James's Theatre. During his engagement there Charles Wyndham appeared in other parts, and, as the following interesting programme shows, did not disdain to appear in farce.

Dear me! how he used to make us all laugh as Walsingham Potts! Notwithstanding the strong attraction of the programme as a whole, hundreds of people thronged the theatre at a late hour for the sake of enjoying that perfect piece of fooling. I saw it

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

Responsible Manager, MISS LITTON.

This Evening, April 27th, 1875, at 8.15,

An entirely new and original Farical Comedy, in Three Acts, entitled—

TOM COBB; Or, FORTUNE'S TOY.

By W. S. GILBERT.

Colonel O. Fipp (An Irish adventurer)	.	.	.	MR. CLIFFORD COOPER.
Tom Cobb	{	(Young Surgeons)	.	MR. E. W. ROYCE.
Whiffle			.	MR. EDGAR BRUCE.
Matilda O. Fipp (the Colonel's Daughter)	.	.	.	MISS EDITH CHALLIS.
Mr. Effingham	{	(A Romantic Family)	.	MR. DE VERE.
Mrs. Effingham			.	MRS. CHIPPENDALE (first appearance since her severe indisposition).
Bulstrode Effingham			.	MR. W. J. HILL.
Caroline Effingham			.	MISS LITTON.
Footman	.	.	.	MR. RUSSELL.
Biddy	.	.	.	MISS E. DOYNE.

Act I. Sitting-room at Colonel O. Fipp's house.

Act II. Same as Act I.

Act III. At Mr. Effingham's.

Three months are supposed to elapse between each act.

Scenery by MR. WALTER HANN.

Preceded at 7.30 by the Comedietta, by the late WM. BROUGH—

A PHENOMENON IN A SMOCK FROCK.

Mr. Sowerberry	.	.	.	MR. CLIFFORD COOPER.
John Buttercup	.	.	.	MR. W. J. HILL.
Mr. Barker	.	.	.	MR. E. S. VINCENT.
James	.	.	.	MR. E. A. RUSSELL.
Mrs. Barker	.	.	.	MISS MURIELLE.
Betsy Chirrup	.	.	.	MISS MILLIE COOK.

To conclude with the Laughable Farce, in One Act,

TRYING IT ON!

Mr. Walsingham Potts	.	.	.	MR. CHARLES WYNDHAM.
Mr. Jobstock	.	.	.	MR. DE VERE.
Mr. Tittlebat	.	.	.	MR. CHARLES STEYNE.
Mrs. Jobstock	.	.	.	MISS M. DAVIS.
Fanny	.	.	.	MISS ROSE EGAN.
Lucy	.	.	.	MISS E. DOYNE.

several times, and always went home after it happy and light-hearted.

In the June of 1875 he appeared in *Brighton* at the Haymarket, and then took his *El Dorado* to Berlin, where, by way of light holiday work, he acted in German. Refreshed by this little experience, he returned to England, and, as we shall see in our next chapter, once more blithely bathed in *Brighton* waters.

CHAPTER IV

CALLED TO THE CRITERION

TO-DAY the opening of a new theatre in London is a matter of frequent occurrence, but thirty years ago it was an event sufficiently rare to create some excitement; and when it was announced that Messrs. Spiers and Pond had built a new playhouse as an adjunct to their handsome Criterion Restaurant in Piccadilly, there was quite a flutter in the theatrical world. There was about it, moreover, a decided novelty. It was to be an underground theatre, into which air had to be continually pumped to save both actors and audiences from being asphyxiated. To be able to dine luxuriously in the handsomely appointed refectory, and then to descend into its vaults to witness a bright entertainment in a cosy theatre, was, to the youthful mind at least, an experience quite as sensational as that of a descent in the Diving Bell at the old Polytechnic.

The new theatre occupied—and of course still occupies—the site of an historic inn which had flourished since the days of the Stuarts under the sign of “The White Bear”; and it was curious to reflect that where well-appointed stage, stalls, pit, dress circle, ay, and even

gallery now stood (for the Criterion had a gallery in those days) the "Bear's" stores of ardent spirits and choice wines might once have been left to mature. "The White Bear" had its own little record of artistic history. In 1763 Benjamin West, the Quaker President of the Royal Academy, had on his arrival from America (*via* Italy) slept beneath its hospitable roof; and it was within its walls, early in 1771, that the talented Luke Sullivan, the assistant of Hogarth, ended a distinguished, if somewhat misguided career. Here, too, lodged John Baptiste Chatelaine, an engraver and draughtsman whose work is deemed worthy of preservation in the British Museum. The two—the Irishman and the Frenchman—became boon-companions, and they both died in the old tavern which had been the scene of their carousals in the same year.

The Criterion Theatre was opened on March 21st, 1874, under the joint management of H. J. Byron and E. P. Hingston. Of Byron and his ready wit I have said something in my preceding chapter; his partner in the new venture had become very well known as the friend and associate of Artemus Ward, the famous American humorist, and being as genial as his comrade had made hosts of friends on his own account, and in the theatrical world, in which he had had great experience, was exceedingly popular.

Poor, gentle, kindly, and ever witty Artemus Ward! He even jested on his all too early death-bed. Tom Robertson, the dramatist, who became his great friend when he visited England, was with him during his dying hours, and, hoping to give him some alleviation,

poured out medicine in a glass and offered it to him.

"My dear Tom," gasped the invalid, "I can't drink that horrible stuff."

"Do," urged Robertson; "it will give you relief, my dear fellow. Do now; take it for my sake. You know I would do anything for you."

"Would you?" said the patient sufferer, feebly stretching out his cold hand to grasp his friend's for nearly the last time.

"Of course I would; you know I would," said Robertson.

"Then drink it yourself," said the dying man, with the glimmer of a smile on his worn features.

In an hour or so the cap and bells were laid aside. Poor Yorick was at rest. "Alas! poor Yorick."

Byron, too, joked to the bitter end. Charles Wyndham used to visit him in his last days, when the poor fellow was tortured with a consumptive cough, and has related how heart-breaking it was to listen to him when he persisted in trying to read his latest plays aloud. His friends tried to show their sympathy by sending him things that they thought would tempt an invalid's palate.

At that time John Hare and W. H. Kendal were in partnership at the St. James's Theatre, and one day Charles Wyndham, paying one of his friendly calls on poor Byron, found him with a fine hare lying by his side. "Hare has just sent it," said the sick man; "it's so big I thought Kendal was inside it."

The following is said to have been one of the last-

of his beloved word-twistings. A friend suggested that as a remedy for his ailments he should try iodide of potassium. "No," said Byron, who was rather tired of such well-meant suggestions, "I'm not going to say I 'a died o' potassium!"

But in 1874 Byron was well and at his best, and for the opening of the new theatre provided an original comedy from his own pen, entitled *An American Lady*, in which he cast himself for a leading part. Why a man who was so busy at his desk that he could not keep pace with his commissions should also choose to act no one knew. His best friends, foremost amongst whom was Tom Robertson, were opposed to the step, but he would have his own will. Though he fired off his own witticisms in a way that was irresistible, he never was a particularly good actor, but there was a certain charm in the gentlemanly ease with which he strolled through his parts, and his appearance on the virgin Criterion boards was quite acceptable.

The bright particular star, however, of *An American Lady* was Mrs. John Wood, of whom we have already heard in connection with Charles Wyndham's early American experiments. She, of course, played the title-part, and was well suited with a character adapted to her inimitable comedy methods. For Mrs. John Wood was, and happily still is, that extremely "rare bird," a perfect feminine comedian. Then, to finish up with, there was a delightful extravaganza by W. S. Gilbert, a veritable "Bab Ballad" on the stage, as whimsical and as good as the same author's *The Fairy's Dilemma*, now, as I write, running merrily at the Garrick Theatre. Truly, he has

good cause to be proud of his long record of successes in pieces in which he has never had a rival. The 1874 play, the thirty years' predecessor of his latest success, was called *Topsyturvedom*, and was, of course, typical of his quaint methods.

Making inquiries into this opening programme I discovered some strange things.

The author of *Topsyturvedom* wrote me :—

“I am sorry to say that my mind is an absolute blank as to the opening of the Criterion. I never saw *Topsyturvedom*. If you happen to have a copy of it and could lend it to me for a few hours, it might suggest some reminiscences ; as it is, I don't even know what the piece was about.”

No one had a copy of it, but I well remember how the one and only Bab Balladist depicted a tiny world (truth to tell, it was a tiny stage), wherein everything was the reverse of what it is in this : how men were exalted for their follies and degraded for their virtues ; how they walked on ceilings and looked up to floors ; showed dislike when they wished to please, and used courteous expressions when they chose to be insolent.

Then its author wrote me again :—

“I am very sorry that I can give you no definite information as to the piece, but it has clean gone out of my mind. I only remember that the principal parts were played by the late John Clarke and Miss Fanny Holland, and that the piece was well played. I also recollect that one of the scenes represented an inverted drawing-room, with a carpet and chairs and table where the ceiling is usually found, and that a large chandelier

protruded from what is usually the floor. How I accounted for the characters walking on the supposed *ceiling* of the room I don't recollect."

Then, concerning *An American Lady*, Mrs. John Wood wrote to me :—

"What I seem best to remember about the opening of the Criterion was having to leave the Queen's Theatre and my dear friend Charles Reade, whose play, *The Wandering Heir*, was then running, he having entrusted me with the part of Philippa, which I created and loved. I was not best pleased at having to leave, but my services had been secured some time before Mr. Reade's production, and after all, perhaps, it was as well I went to open the Criterion, as it brought out from her seclusion Miss Ellen Terry, who was selected as my successor. I could not have been paid a greater compliment. The piece at the Criterion as a piece was a fair success. The acting part of it was a great one for H. J. Byron, John Clarke, David Fisher, J. H. Barnes, Mrs. Gaston Murray, and myself. I may truly say we had an ovation. There was not much to remember after that, except that a friend told me how some people he had met at dinner on the Sunday following the production were discussing the charming manner in which the piece was put upon the stage, the loveliness of my gowns, and some personal compliments on myself, when one lady said, 'Oh yes, very lovely; but who wouldn't look lovely in such dresses?' This, I thought, was rather a snub for me!"

Verily Sir Fretful Plagiary's "good-natured friends" are always with us, but Mrs. John Wood could well

afford to laugh at such a silly remark. As every playgoer knows, she not only acts, but looks to perfection every part in which she appears.

Continuing, Mrs. Wood said :—

“The strange thing is that *nowhere* can the MS. of *An American Lady* now be found. Poor Mrs. Byron came to me at the old Court Theatre to ask if I had a copy or knew anything about it. All I could tell her was that the last time I saw the MS. was when Mr. Byron and I played our one big scene for a benefit at Drury Lane, and it seems it has never been seen or heard of since ! She died soon after our meeting.”

Now here was a curious thing. Two original and successful plays, by two very notable dramatic authors, utterly lost and forgotten ! I am afraid it was the case with far too many plays of that era. They were not then duplicated and triplicated by the typewriter, and comparatively few found their way into the hands of the printer. They only existed in manuscript—they suffered in the hands of the prompter—and when the run of the piece was over were mislaid and lost. It is a great pity, for many of them would make interesting reading in the light of to-day.

This attractive opening programme sufficed the Criterion for some time, but later productions were, with the exception of the charming comic opera, *Les Près Saint-Gervais*, composed by M. Charles Lecocq, and adapted to the English stage by Robert Reece, and which held the stage for some time, not too successful. The management, too, had changed hands, and its position drooped into dilemma.

In the meantime Charles Wyndham, ever touring about with his successful *Brighton*, was also in a state of perplexity. He had made a great hit ; though he never was a man to flatter himself, he ought to have known that he was recognised—and deservedly recognised—as a “star” actor, and that it would never do for him to rejoin what were in those days still called the “stock” companies. On the other hand, he wisely hesitated to invest his capital in the costly and highly risky experiment of taking a London theatre on his own account.

But the Fates were at work both for him and the Criterion.

In the quickly waning days of 1875 he was playing the popular *Brighton* at Brighton when his unexpected chance came—but here he shall tell his own story of what happened at a most critical moment of his career.

“In almost everybody’s life,” he told me in a letter instinct with modesty, “there comes a time when a man finds himself crossing a bridge without knowing what new conditions are to face him on the other side. In 1875 (fancy !) I felt myself crossing. The psychical moment had come when I stood and paused, unwilling to go back, in doubt how to go forward. I had just got a little beyond the “stock” position when managers would be likely to expect I had views of advancing, and therefore need not be approached about a stock engagement, and at the same time had not reached a position strong enough to suggest to managers to invite me to the provinces to star. Those were not the days of ‘syndicates,’ and the business of the theatre was confined to theatrical people. I was beginning to get very

anxious. One morning (Thursday) I was sitting over my breakfast when a telegram was brought to me. It was from Tom Smale, long acting manager to Thomas Thorne. 'Would you care to go in with me in management of a London theatre?' Whilst wondering what he meant, which theatre, what conditions, a second telegram arrived from a leading dramatic agent. 'Will you accept the management of a London theatre?'—and the minute after one from Henderson, the husband of Lydia Thompson: 'Will you open here at Criterion next Monday in *Brighton* and go in with me in management?' There was something more definite in this, and I at once went to town to see Henderson. It seemed the Criterion Theatre, which had long been very unlucky, and had grown to be considered an unlucky house, had suddenly closed the previous evening. It had first Byron as manager, then D'Oyley Carte, then Spiers and Pond themselves, and lastly M. Petrie, a Frenchman, till the collapse came. It was easy to discover that the three telegrams related to the same theatre. Spiers and Pond, most reluctant to have the theatre shut up in this lamentable manner, had flown the next morning to the dramatic agent, who had promptly applied to me. Smale had heard of the collapse, and also telegraphed to me on his own account. Both were so reserved in their information that it is no wonder I answered Henderson first, as he had given some particulars. He was a very prompt business man, and pounded his ideas at once. Spiers and Pond were ready to give him the theatre rent free, provided he could open the following Monday with some sound

attraction, so he telegraphed to me. I at once set to work to engage my company, and to rehearse, and managed to open with a revival of *Brighton* three days after, for a month's run. Then Henderson produced a burlesque which was not a success, and so proposed a partnership to commence the following Easter."

Surely he was now convinced (in spite of his modesty) that he was regarded as a star! It was a daring undertaking, for "next Monday's" programme at the Criterion—the date was December 27th, 1875—included not only *Brighton*, but that bright adaptation from the French *La Débutante* which had been made so popular by Alfred Wigan under the title of *The First Night*.

Charles Wyndham at once found favour in his new home—the home that he was to dominate so long and so honourably. Once more his delightful Bob Sackett was warmly welcomed in town, and in the very difficult part of Achille Talma Dufard, in the second piece, he won high praise. During its course there was a Grand Duo from *The Huguenots*, in which he appeared as Raoul to the Rose of Miss Annie Goodall.

Among the company on that memorable opening night were Mr. Edgar Bruce (of whom I shall have more to say presently) and Mr. Edward Righton.

The latter was an admirable comedian, whose name well deserves record. In comedy, farce, and burlesque he played many parts, and he played them all well. Probably he reached perfection's point when he impersonated the dear, tender-hearted, Dickens-loving old bookseller in R. C. Carton's pretty comedy, *Liberty Hall*. Lionel Brough also appeared in that admirably drawn

character, and he told me that he never played without a tear in his eye and a sob in his voice.

Truly that first night at the Criterion was an historic one, and I am glad to reproduce here a facsimile of the programme.

Playgoers of a light-hearted turn of mind might well have joined in the time-honoured chorus of "The Chough and the Crow"—

"Up rouse ye, then, my merry, merry men,
For 'tis our opening day."

As a matter of fact, I think thousands of them, though they might not have put it quite in these words, had the feeling in their hearts. Anyway, they proved it by the loyal support they accorded Charles Wyndham as the elected commander of the Light Brigade of the London theatres. The fact is, the London playhouses were rather dull at that time. The old-style burlesques, which were really funny, and at which we used to roar with laughter, had for some regrettable reason died out, and nothing very mirthful had taken their place.

The Adelphi was then, as it had been for many years, the popular home of poor, despised old melodrama. Alas! I fear I must plead guilty to being one of those degenerate playgoers who could take pleasure in seeing virtue victorious and vice vanquished in the good old-fashioned way. John Hare and the Kendals were at the old Court Theatre, and in common with the Bancrofts, who still lingered at the little Prince of Wales's Theatre in Tottenham Street, were, according to their wont, appearing in comedy of the highest type;

CRITERION THEATRE

REGENT CIRCUS, PICCADILLY.

Proprietors

Messrs SPIERS and POND.

GREAT CHRISTMAS ATTRACTION.

The Management have great pleasure in announcing that they have entered into an arrangement with

CHARLES WYNDHAM

FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF NIGHTS,

Commencing on Boxing-Night, December 27, 1875.

At 8.45, Production of the highly Successful Comedy, in Four Acts, by FRANK MARSHALL and BRONSON HOWARD, entitled

BRIGHTON

The main incidents taken from Bronson Howard's American Comedy entitled "Saratoga."

Bob Sackett	Mr CHARLES WYNDHAM
Mr Carter	Mr DEVERE
Fred Carter, his Son... .. .	Mr SAUSTIN
Mr Vanderpump	Mr EDWARD RIGHTON
Jack Benedict	Mr EDGAR BRUCE
Sir Louis Park	Mr HOWARD RUSSELL
Mr Columbus Drake	Mr E. N. HALLOWES
1st Keeper	Mr JOHNSON
Effie Remington	Miss ALICE DELLA
Mrs Alston	Miss MARIE DE GREY
Mrs Vanderpump	Miss MARIA DALY
Virginia, her daughter	Miss M. DAVIS
Mrs Carter	Miss ROSE EGAN
Mary	Miss HILL

Act 1. THE INTERIOR OF THE AQUARIUM & FERNERY.

Act 2. The Entrance Hall and Staircase of the Grand Hotel.

Act 3. PIC-NIC AT BRAMBER CASTLE.

Act 4. THE MORNING ROOM AT THE HOTEL.

Preceded at 7.30, with the Musical Abundancy of

THE DEBUTANTE.

Achille Talma Dufard	French Actor	Mr CHARLES WYNDHAM
Hyacinth Parnassus		Mr EDWARD RIGHTON
The Manager		Mr HOWARD RUSSELL
The Prompter... .. .	Mr SAUSTIN	The Call-boy
The Hon. Bertie Fitzdangle		Master W. BRUNTON
Rose Dufard		Mr E. N. HALLOWES
Arabella		Miss ANNIE GOODALL
		Miss ROSE EGAN

Grand Duo from THE HUGUENOTS.

Raoul	Mr CHARLES WYNDHAM	Rose	Miss ANNIE GOODALL
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Places may be secured at all the principal Libraries, and at the Box-office of the Theatre, who is open daily from 11 till 5, under the direction of Mr F. J. POTTER.

PRICES OF ADMISSION - Private Boxes, One to Three Guineas.
Stalls, 7s. 6d. Dress Circle, 5s. Boxes, (Bonnetts alloweb), 4s. Pit, 2s. Amphitheatre, 1s.
DOORS OPEN AT 7. COMMENCE AT 7.30.

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at the Gaiety, J. L. Toole was at the head of an admirable company, playing chiefly in domestic drama and elaborate extravaganza ; with Sothorn away on one of his prolonged American tours, the Haymarket sadly lacked an attraction ; Drury Lane hovered between spectacular drama and pantomime ; Henry Irving was engrossed in his famous Shakespearean productions at the Lyceum, and at the Olympic ever breezy, ever buoyant, and always admirable Henry Neville was the deservedly popular hero of the drama of romance. The Folly (once called the Charing Cross, and later so well and lovingly known as Toole's Theatre), the Royalty, and the Strand were rather vainly endeavouring to find bright entertainments as substitutes for the old burlesques ; the Vaudeville was in the midst of the prolonged run of H. J. Byron's *Our Boys* (a piece that had been written for and refused by J. L. Toole, and which made the fortunes of David James and Thomas Thorne), and the St. James's was in a parlous state. Clearly London wanted laughter, and laughter in a new form ; and just at the right moment Charles Wyndham, resisting his ever-present impulse to play serious parts, wisely resolved to make the Criterion Theatre—for a time at any rate—the home of the merry three-act farce that in *Brighton* he had taught people to love.

It is curious to note the changes that have taken place in London's stageland ever since the Boxing-day of 1875. Though Charles Wyndham has deserted it for other and more commodious playhouses of his own building, the popular little—I should say, enlarged—Criterion holds its own, but the Adelphi is devoted

to musical comedy ; the old Court Theatre, the Folly, the old Gaiety (of John Hollingshead renown), the Globe, the Olympic, the Prince of Wales's, so associated with the memory of T. W. Robertson and his historic series of what are now commonly called the "Caste" comedies, have all vanished. Of course, other and very handsome theatres have sprung up to take their places, but, I suppose, old playgoers, who really had their heart in the thing, who have hoarded their old playbills, and still gloat over them as if they were choice engravings, or even the most priceless gems of absolutely worthless postage stamps, will ever linger longingly on the scenes of their past enjoyment. And would they not belong to an ungrateful world if it were not so ?

At the Criterion *Brighton* scored its customary success, and seeing what a strong attraction he had in his new ally, Alexander Henderson was only too glad to convert an engagement into a partnership. But before he could permit him to produce a new piece he was compelled, under contract, to produce another invertebrate comic opera—an adaptation of *Le Roi Matapa* of MM. Clairville and Gastineau, entitled *Piff Paff; or the Magic Armoury*. So Charles Wyndham went off to Paris in search of novelties, returning with a clever version of *Le Procès Veraudieux* (a very popular Parisian play), by Clement Scott and Arthur Matthison (who chose to figure in the bills as John Doe and Richard Roe), entitled *The Great Divorce Case*. This was produced on April 15th, and met with immediate favour from the public ; but to show that the older critics were not yet quite reconciled to the new style of entertain-

ment, I will quote the following summing up of the piece from the pages of the *Athenæum*:—

“When it has been said that *The Great Divorce Case* causes laughter, the best that can be advanced in its favour is uttered. Its action is wholly preposterous and impossible, and its characters belong entirely to the region of farce. It is acted, however, with much spirit by Messrs. Wyndham and Clarke, and proves thoroughly diverting.”

That was just it, it proved thoroughly diverting, and Charles Wyndham proved himself right in his theory that the playgoers of the period wanted diversion. And so *The Great Divorce Case* ran merrily on until November, Charles Wyndham being admirably supported by a company that included John Clarke, Edward Righton, Herbert Standing, Miss Nelly Bromley, Miss Harriet Coveney, Miss Emily Vining, Miss E. Duncan, Miss E. Bruce, Miss Carruthers, Miss Eastlake, and Jennie Weathersby. As, in 1876, the patrons of the drama did not feel bound to have such late dinners as they do to-day, or require the pick-me-up of a costly supper after an early curtain-fall, they demanded a pretty full programme, and so *The Great Divorce Case* was followed by a merry piece of nonsense called *Robin Hood; or The Maid that was Arch and the Youth that was Archer*, and a farce by Arthur Matthison entitled *The Wall of China*. It will be seen that from the first Charles Wyndham started with the wise policy of surrounding himself with a company worthy of his steel instead of making the great mistake—it is one that actor-managers have often made—of engaging nonentities in order that

he might always be in the front of the picture. That he should contrive as he did, by sheer hard work and indomitable high spirits, and in spite of the rivalry he had created for himself, to be always in that enviable position is quite another matter.

One of his happiest selections was that of John Clarke. Poor fellow! in an accident he had broken a leg, and, walking afterwards with a limp, was known as "Lame Clarke." Those who remember him will recall his almost saturnine humour, with the gleam of good temper, a strong sense of fun, and the evidence of a sound heart piercing through it, just as the sun often tries to shine through dark clouds. Tom Robertson had fitted him to a nicety when he chose him for the original Hugh Chalcot—apparently lazy and cynical, but really chivalric—in his pretty comedy, *Ours*.

By some of my readers who do not remember the early Criterion days it will be imagined what an invaluable foil his method was to the light, airy, gossamer, and ever-captivating style of Charles Wyndham. When these two were on the stage the audiences were always in roars of laughter, and the more seriously they took the ridiculous entanglements in which they found themselves involved, the louder the pleasant sounds of merriment became. John Clarke married the charming Teresa Furtado, who in her day delighted us in burlesque, comedy, and drama. He was greatly devoted to her, and when she was engaged to play Esmeralda in an English stage version of Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame* at the Adelphi, he felt it his duty to present her with the goat associated with that captivating character.

Accordingly a "warranted perfectly docile" specimen of the article was procured through a dealer in Leadenhall market, and, proud of his purchase, Clarke had it put in a four-wheel cab and, stepping in after it, conveyed it to its new home. Unhappily the goat took an immediate and intense dislike to the comedian, and, as the miserably equipped four-wheeler jolted and rattled over the uneven granite pavement that was in vogue in those days, commenced a series of savage assaults upon him. Now to be in conflict with a lively and wickedly inclined goat within the close confines of a London "growler" of the period of which I am writing was to be in a position at once perilous and contemptible. For obvious reasons—for by adopting that method of action he would have exposed himself to a butting attack of a most disagreeable nature—he could not put his head out of the window to tell the self-absorbed and apparently deaf driver to stop: there was no other means of communication with him, and wayfarers who recognised the popular actor only laughed. Thus it came about that when he at last reached his beloved Teresa, and made his presentation, he was in such an absurdly dishevelled, not to say damaged condition, that he was received, not with the sympathy that his gallantry deserved, but with an outbreak of uncontrollable laughter. Happily the goat took very kindly to its sweet mistress—played its part well on the stage—and henceforth was installed as a household pet.

But the creature never forgot its animosity to its purchaser. At the back of the house in which Clarke lived was a metropolitan apology for a garden, and in it

the goat, tethered to a stake, mainly lived. Within this enclosure John Clarke, when studying a new part, loved to stroll, and when in a moment of abstraction he got within reach of the animal, he was attacked with a malignity that was as vicious as it was absurd. Owing to his lameness he was slow in his movements, a fact of which the goat took effective advantage, and to see him at such moments pinned to the ground, his face the picture of despair, and his well-known serio-comic voice calling out, "Teresa! Teresa! Help! Help! Teresa! Teresa!" and to note at the same time that dainty lady trying to hasten to the rescue of her lord, but hardly able to move for suppressed laughter, was to witness one of the most comical of scenes.

As to the other actors engaged by Charles Wyndham for his determined venture—of Edward Righton I have already said a few words—Herbert Standing was an admirable all-round actor, and Miss Nellie Bromley, Miss Emily Duncan, Miss Emily Vining, and Miss Edith Bruce among the brightest actresses of light parts then on the London stage. Miss Harriet Coveney, with her keen sense of fun, was always welcome; and Miss Eastlake, destined to do such good serious work with Wilson Barrett, made her first appearance on the stage.

It is characteristic of Charles Wyndham that though, in the days of 1876, an adaptation of *Le Procès Veraudieux* could be freely made by anyone taking a fancy to it, he told the French authors he wished to pay them fees. His reward for this piece of straightforwardness was almost like that you read of in the old fairy stories, for the appreciative dramatists insisted in impulsive French

fashion that he should purchase the English rights in their latest and greatest triumph, a play which was the temporary excitement of Paris. At first he did not want it, for he felt it too closely resembled *The Great Divorce Case*; but his grateful friends across the Channel were importunate, and at last he bought it for the proverbial "old song." In course of time it became *The Pink Dominos*, and was one of the greatest financial successes of the Wyndham farcical-comedy days at the Criterion.

The little Piccadilly playhouse was not remarkable for its capacity for what is known as "elbow-room," and as its new manager meant to be not only a hard-working actor, but an indefatigable director of "affairs," he soon devised an office for himself in close proximity to the theatre, and yet not easy of access—a great point for a busy man, who does not want to be interrupted in his work by mere busybodies.

Following his own fancy, he had this fitted up like the cabin of a yacht. Charles Dickens has in his own fascinating way described the seaman-like lodgings of Captain Cuttle in the strange little world of London's dock-land; and one remembers how at Portsmouth Mr. Vincent Crummles found shelter within the decidedly nautical residence of "one Bulph, a pilot, who sported a boat-green door, with window-frames of the same colour, and had the little finger of a drowned man on his parlour mantelshef, with other maritime and nautical curiosities"; but I do not think that even the inimitable Boz could have pictured a perfectly appointed sea-cabin in the heart of Piccadilly.



From a portrait by Mr. Vernon Heath

SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM

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Yet there it was, and in it Charles Wyndham transacted a very record of business. It was exactly like a cabin—the cabin of a perfectly equipped yacht. The shape of the walls suggested the modelling of the inner sides of a ship—one expected the salt sea spray to dash against the round, bull's-eye-like windows—and the lamps swinging in their swivelled sockets uncannily reminded bad sailors of weird nights spent in watching such lights as they adjusted their balance to the rolling of a vessel in troubled waters. And all the other appointments were suggestive of life on the ocean wave. There, surrounded by that great sea of London which is ever kept moving by ceaseless currents of constantly changing traffic, Charles Wyndham could hold his own, and steer his course as he would, without any fear of being boarded by visitors who had no right to intrude upon his much-occupied time.

His next production was in November, 1876, when he produced an adaptation by H. B. Farnie from the French *La Boule*, entitled *Hot Water*. This was a merry, irresponsible piece, containing several diverting situations, especially one in which a lady, having to give evidence in a court of law, was told to bare her hand for the purpose of being sworn. This she did by very deliberately unfastening one of those many-buttoned, elongated gloves (much in vogue in those days), that reach almost to the shoulder, and then slowly “un-skinning” it (for it was a tight fit) from her shapely arm. So excited became the court over this elaborate process, that all the men, including learned counsel and pompous judge, stood on tiptoe to witness it,

and even the audiences seemed to become infected by their excitement, for I know that on the nights on which I saw the piece many men stood up as if in deep sympathy with those on the stage. Never, I should say, was so much laughter created within the walls of a theatre by a mere piece of business that led to nothing, and was almost ridiculously, but never unsuccessfully, prolonged.

In his new part, which he played to perfection, Charles Wyndham was again supported by John Clarke and Edward Righton, and by Miss Fanny Josephs, who now joined his forces. She was a great acquisition, as those well know who can recall her refined acting in the Robertson comedies in the early Bancroft days at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre.

Hot Water was played in conjunction with a quaint and very acceptable piece from the pen of W. S. Gilbert, called *On Bail*, in which John Clarke, Miss Fanny Josephs, and their associates won much favour.

The next production was destined to cause quite a turmoil in stage-land. We have seen how Charles Wyndham had secured the English rights in MM. Hennequin and Delacour's great Parisian success, *Les Dominos Roses*. For the English stage it contained (in those days) some rather perilous situations, and much depended on the tact and skill of the English adapter. The delicate task of transferring it to our boards was very wisely entrusted to the gifted pen of James Albery, whose name with theatre-goers was then a household word.

When, on June 4th, James Albery's comedy, *Two*

Roses, was produced at the Vaudeville Theatre, and Henry Irving, by his masterly impersonation of the grandly conceived character of Digby Grant, in one evening claimed his right to take rank among the very best actors on the London stage, everyone thought that the long-looked-for new master-dramatist, who from time to time seemed coming, and yet never quite arrived, had arisen. Never was there such a first night's triumph for a playwright's first piece.

His work (which no doubt had known its days of rejection) was in eager demand, and I remember that when his companion picture, *Two Thorns*, was, a little later on, produced at the St. James's, an enthusiastic and prominent critic wrote that the comedy "could not have been received with greater enthusiasm if it had been a second *School for Scandal* and Mr. Albery a second Sheridan."

Just at that time I met the happy young dramatist at luncheon at the home of E. A. Sothorn, which was then at the picturesque "Cedars," in Wright's Lane, Kensington, and listened with open eyes and watering mouth (for I, too, wanted to write plays; "everyone I know," Sothorn used to say, "either wants to write me a play or sell me wine"), while princely terms were discussed for a piece as good as *Two Roses*.

I recollect that Albery, who was in high spirits, told me as we walked away together down the Kensington High Street, he brimming over with new ideas, and eager to be at his desk, that "there was no difficulty in the matter. Not the least in the world." But somehow that play was never written, or if written never

produced, or at all events not by Sothern. Other comedies from the new pen were seen from time to time at various theatres, but though they were all cleverly conceived and brightly written, they failed to achieve prolonged popularity. *Forgiven*, produced at the Globe Theatre by poor H. J. Montague, with a company that included grand old Henry Compton of Haymarket renown, was an excellent piece of work ; and I remember being greatly struck with the originality and power of *Tweedie's Rights*, brought out by David James and Thomas Thorne (they were splendidly fitted with parts) at the Vaudeville ; but, while *Two Roses* triumphantly holds its own upon the stage, these, and other good things, are forgotten.

The fact is, James Albery was in the very difficult position of a man who, having commenced his career with one great and indisputable success, was always expected to repeat it, and this led both critics and playgoers to judge him by a too high standard—the standard which he himself had set up.

But whether his plays proved permanently attractive or not, upon one point all were agreed, and it was that as a writer of crisp, witty, and yet always natural dialogue he had few equals, and, therefore, everyone felt that Sir Charles Wyndham did a wise thing when he placed the delicate *Les Dominos Roses* in his hands.

The adaptation was most adroitly done, the piece was perfectly acted by Charles Wyndham and his well-drilled company, and it was received with clamours of applause from its first-night audience ; but there was unforeseen trouble in store !

It will be remembered that it was a three-act farce, the incidents of which spring from the freak of two wives who, to test their husbands, send them invitations to a masked ball. No doubt the situations arising from this groundwork were a little risky, and, if not well handled, might have proved suggestive, but no harm was intended, and certainly none was done. Concerning it that admirable critic, Joseph Knight, said: "The well-known defence which, according to Scott, Sterne adopted when a Yorkshire lady told him his book was not proper for female perusal, would probably be employed with more propriety by Mr. Albery to vindicate his version of *Les Dominos Roses* of MM. Hennequin and Delacour. If not exactly childlike in innocence, the intrigue in *The Pink Dominos* has at least no absolute wickedness. What is worst in it is of that kind which Coleridge characterised when he said, 'We have only to suppose society innocent, and then nine-tenths of this sort of wit would be like a stone that falls in snow, making no sound, because exciting no resistance.' The English version is a capital instance of successful adaptation. In some respects, indeed, it is better than the original. The dialogue is wholly English, and brims over with that kind of oddity of association in which Mr. Albery is unequalled. The last act is a model of construction."

On the whole, I think, the piece was well received by the critics, and certainly no one could take exception to the brilliant way in which it was acted by Charles Wyndham, supported by a company that included Herbert Standing, Henry Ashley, Augustus Harris, John Clarke,

Miss Eastlake, Miss Fanny Josephs, Miss Edith Bruce, and Mlle. Camille Clermont. But good old Edward Leman Blanchard took exception to the production, and caused a great flutter in the inquisitive, capacious, and ever-receptive breast of Mrs. Grundy. Blanchard was a critic of the old school. He dearly loved the English stage, and hated the idea of its being made the scene of Parisian misrule. He had been somewhat alarmed by recent productions ; *The Pink Dominos* was the last straw on the camel's back, and, amiable though he was, he determined to break a butterfly upon the wheel. It must be remembered, however, that to him the gaily coloured butterfly had the forbidding appearance of a death's-head moth.

At that time he and Clement Scott were the joint dramatic critics of the *Daily Telegraph*, and as the passing of the first-night verdict on *The Pink Dominos* fell into his hands, he had ample opportunity for making public his honest convictions.

In his interesting diary, which, after his death, was published under the editorship of Clement Scott and Cecil Howard, there is this entry : "All evening writing a notice of a Criterion piece by James Albery, from the French, called *The Pink Dominos*, which is not a comedy for the young to see"; and to this is added an editorial note, "This was one of the most severe notices ever penned by E. L. Blanchard. It was universally ascribed to Clement Scott, who was not present on the occasion. The result of the brilliant attack on improper French farces was that the theatre was crammed ! —C. S."

Of course, it was not an "improper French farce," but Mrs. Grundy read the alarming criticism, passed it on to her friends, induced them to go with her to see the naughty play, cackled about it, condemned it, and so gave it bold advertisement.

In such matters as these we English are curiously constituted. Speaking of us, the well-known and very daring French actress Schneider used to say that her acting was far more *prononcé* in London than in Paris, indeed, that a Parisian audience would not have stood what delighted her English patrons. She knew their taste, provided it was done by a French actress and in the French tongue.

And so Mrs. Grundy, awakened by well-meaning Blanchard, and ever on the alert for a novelty, drove her willing and hungry herd to the pastures of the little Piccadilly playhouse, and there they cropped herbage that left no bad taste on any unsullied palate. But all the time Mrs. Grundy professed to be very indignant. Blanchard was one of the kindest and most lovable of men, and in condemning *The Pink Dominos* was no doubt prompted by a good if mistaken motive. I wonder what his pure mind would have thought of the horribly suggestive plays of the Ibsen school, and some of our prurient modern problem plays, which are certainly as unclean in their way as the most reckless of Palais Royal farces. Indeed, they are more pernicious, for in place of what is meant for fun we get something that approaches filth.

It was my good fortune to know Blanchard, and I shall never forget the charm of his conversation. He

was a perfect encyclopædia of theatrical lore, and was always ready to give information to those who were genuinely interested in the subject. His carefully kept diary shows the simplicity as well as the activity of the man's life. Working hard all the year as playwright, pantomime librettist, teller of stories, journalist, dramatic critic, and what not, he would always wind up on December 31st with an entry to this effect:—

“Wife and I see the Old Year out and the New Year in with a loving kiss and interchange of pleasant greetings and New Year's gifts. The past year has been one of continual work, with only two days' holiday; but it has been brightened with much domestic happiness, which I have to be deeply grateful for. Once more I have to thank the Great Architect of the Universe for enabling me to enjoy more of earth than I could ever have thought to do.

“Revenue for the year, £521 4s. 6d.”

Just as the Cratchits at their little Christmas feast would not have dreamed of saying that their pudding was a small pudding for a large party, so it never seemed to occur to Blanchard that his “revenue” was a somewhat pitiful one (and the year from which I have quoted was quite a good one for him) for the quantity and quality of the work done.

Such was the critic who inadvertently gave bold advertisement to *The Pink Dominos*. Dear old Blanchard! He possessed the strength of a man and the gentleness of a woman; he knew how to use both, and he was beloved by all who were privileged to call him friend.

The situation at the Criterion was a somewhat pecu-

liar one, and I think it must have caused Charles Wyndham some annoyance, for he would have been as reluctant as Blanchard himself to offer the public anything really obnoxious to good taste. But at the same time he could not fail to see the humour of it.

In connection with it Sutherland Edwards told a droll little story, which ran as follows :—

“‘Free list entirely suspended.’

“That notice was conspicuous in the lobby of the Criterion Theatre, and Charles Wyndham was looking at it with satisfaction writ large upon his countenance when one fine morning I gave him friendly greeting.

“‘Good business, eh?’ I inquired.

“‘What do you think?’ was the reply.

“‘Then I will wait,’ I answered, with becoming modesty.

“‘Wait? What for? Want to bring somebody? Your wife? Your daughter?’ asked the actor-manager, who, when I had answered that he had guessed correctly, added quite merrily, ‘Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip! Bring them along; but first look at this and blush,’ and he whipped from his waistcoat pocket a newspaper cutting with, underlined, the words with which I had concluded a long notice of *The Pink Dominos*. They read as follows: ‘The piece is funny, uproariously funny, but husbands desirous of seeing it will *do well to leave their wives and daughters at home!*’

“The impropriety, Wyndham will tell you now, was discovered only by nice men with nasty ideas—by implication I was included—who have since swallowed

a good deal of dramatic nastiness and have pronounced it very much to their liking."

Truly the world is fairly full of humbugs, and among them, I fear, are some dramatic critics. Anyway, Sutherland Edwards, who was no mean authority on the subject, seemed to think so.

In the original cast of the play we find the name of Augustus Harris, subsequently to become the courageous and successful manager of Drury Lane, a Sheriff of London City, and, for his civic services, a recipient of knighthood. Poor Augustus Harris! He aimed high, and he hit the mark, but it is to be feared that he shortened his days by hard work. Possibly in the overcrowded days of his triumphs he looked back wistfully to the time when he was playing Harry Greenlanes in *The Pink Dominos*. Another valuable addition to the company was made by the engagement of Mr. Henry Ashley, whose tactful impersonation of the exceedingly difficult character of Joskyn Tubbs was as good as anything in the production.

Charles Wyndham once told me an amusing story associated with these days, of which I have already spoken, when he conducted the theatrical entertainments at the Crystal Palace, and in which Augustus Harris was concerned.

His (Charles Wyndham's) direction of the stage department caused at the time a good deal of favourable comment. It was based on exceptional casts of all the classic plays, he having the opportunity offered him by his brother managers of collecting all the most celebrated artists most adapted to the respective casts. By

a peculiar method of reasoning, the Crystal Palace directors (composed of generals, doctors, and other professional men) came to the conclusion that a manager who could so successfully stage Shakespeare and *Œdipus* could produce pantomimes at Christmas, so determined that in future Charles Wyndham should take that also out of their hands. In vain he protested he knew nothing about pantomime; the directors were resolute, and not wishing in those early days of his career to appear fastidious, he consented, with a heavy heart, to the ordeal. Pantomimes are generally commenced nine months ahead, but it was not surprising that August had arrived and Charles Wyndham was still without a shred of preparation. One day in this month he was accosted by a young man, anxious, he said, to produce a pantomime. It was young Augustus Harris, who chanced to have all his late father's talent for this form of entertainment. An inspection of Harris's plans soon convinced Charles Wyndham that the young fellow was a genius on the path of glory, so an arrangement was effected and Harris began his scenery, dresses, music, and words at once, and relieved Charles Wyndham not only of further anxiety, but what is equally important, of any work. At least, so Charles Wyndham thought, but he had not reckoned with the directors. Their faith was in Wyndham, and in Wyndham only. They pooh-poohed the young fellow who they saw daily working his heart out at rehearsal. They appealed to Charles Wyndham to come to the rescue, as they were sure everything was going to pieces in the hands of the young man. So Charles

Wyndham, in the spirit of concession, consented to come down and superintend, which simply meant that he sat in a chair in the centre of the stage eating nuts. At once the directors were pacified and convinced that everything was now going *à merveille*. Poor Harris resented this depreciation of himself very much, but was philosopher enough to pocket the slight in view of the fact that it was announced in the paper that Augustus Harris *filis* was producing the entertainment. He was working a pantomime as Charles Wyndham was working then at Shakespeare, for kudos, not for gain, and he hoped to see well-won praise in the papers. Alas! the papers were as little observant of him as the directors. They pronounced the pantomime the greatest success the Palace had seen, and all the marvellous effects were put down to the work of the wonderful Charles Wyndham. Poor Harris, reading the criticisms, and listening to the lavish praise of Charles Wyndham, was broken-hearted. After a week of it, he proposed to write to the papers and contradict everything. Charles Wyndham gave him full permission to do so, but pointed out to him that he would not regain lost ground that year, and might expose himself to ridicule, at the same time reminding him that he (Charles Wyndham) had no ambition for any reputation in connection with the Christmas production, and advising him to let him take his own turn a little later. Further, he promised to make the announcement that he had, in consequence of Augustus Harris's great success, engaged him to produce the next pantomime, and thus let the truth permeate more surely than it

would by any letters to the Press, which would be accepted with reserve. Harris saw the result ; next year he stood alone, and soon after opportunity afforded him to take Drury Lane and commence there his wonderful career.

But the public always supposed that Charles Wyndham had been the successful producer of a pantomime !

Piccadilly and its vicinity had not in *The Pink Dominos* days arrived at a time when it was useless to open a theatre until a fashionably late hour, and accordingly the great attraction of the evening was preceded by *The Porter's Knot*, with John Clarke in Robson's famous part of Sampson Burr.

No successor to *The Pink Dominos* was required until February, 1879, and then Charles Wyndham, who now had sole control of the Criterion, produced Bronson Howard's comedy, *Truth*, which under the title of *Hurricanes* had made a great success in America. As might have been expected from its author, it was a charming piece of literary stagecraft, this time written in the true sense of parody.

It was heralded by the lines—

“Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
The eternal years of heaven are hers :
But Error, wounded, withers in pain,
And dies among his worshippers.”

And those who can recall the piece which, while being very amusing, distinctly conveyed a moral, will remember how excellent Charles Wyndham was as the timid married man who, happily married to a charming

Quakeress, takes some young friends to a fancy-dress ball, and being charged with suspected iniquity by an interfering mother-in-law, aimlessly tries to explain his conduct by a series of lies that, to the infinite mirth of audiences, burst like so many rainbow-hued bubbles. The piece was full of humorous complications, and in it the much-perplexed hero was admirably supported by the jovial W. J. Hill, Herbert Standing, Miss Mary Rorke, Miss Emily Vining, and, above all, by that fine actress, Mrs. Stephens, who as the exasperating mother-in-law was supreme.

In his next production, *Betsy*, F. C. Burnand's remarkably clever adaptation of MM. Hennequin and Najac's very "French, French" play, *Bébé*, Charles Wyndham did not cast himself for a part, but, having with great tact and judgment launched his new venture, went off into the provinces (where he was ever welcome) with his old love, *Brighton*, eventually settling down with it for a short season at the Olympic Theatre, where he was supported, amongst others, by that droll comedian, W. S. Penley, whose name will ever be associated with *The Private Secretary* and *Charlie's Aunt*. So popular proved the vivacious *Betsy* that Charles Wyndham was actually kept out of his own home until November, 1880, when he appeared in *Where's the Cat?* an amusing piece, freely adapted from the German, by James Albery. In addition to many of our old friends, an exceptionally strong cast included George Giddens, Herbert Beerbohm Tree (then on the threshold of his brilliant career), and Mrs. John Wood.

Once more it was acknowledged that as a light

comedian Charles Wyndham was unrivalled, and that he could make any play go by sheer force of animal spirits. The next piece on the list was *Butterfly Fever*, brightly adapted from the French *La Papillone*, by James Mortimer. It was of the same light and sparkling brand, and had a fair run, but in December, 1881, a bolder step was taken.

During the last months of what proved to be his fatal illness, poor Sothern was studying with intense interest and delight a new part that had been specially written for him by W. S. Gilbert. I was often with him at that time, and shall never forget how the feeble invalid would, with a great effort, rouse himself to read to me, with intense enthusiasm, and with the old merry twinkle in his beautiful eyes, some passage in the play that especially appealed to his quick sense of fun. Evidently he pinned immense faith in *Foggerty's Fairy*, and declared that his part in it would suit him to perfection. Indeed, he inspired others to think the same, and his friends rejoiced to see how sanguine he was of a new and striking success when he was "well enough to act again."

Alas! that day never came, and he died with his carefully marked copy of the piece in which he was not permitted to appear by his bedside.

What more natural than the reversion of *Foggerty's Fairy* passing into the hands of Charles Wyndham, who had been Sothern's intimate comrade and friendly rival, and who was now his acknowledged successor? The piece was as wild a story of whimsical extravagance as even the author of the *Bab Ballads* ever conceived.

To all endowed with a sense of humour it would make fascinating reading, just as the libretti of the Savoy operas make fascinating reading.

I was reading that carefully marked copy of which I have spoken (after my dear friend's death it was given to me) the other day—pictured how the part of Frederick Foggerty would have fitted Sothern, just as it fitted Charles Wyndham, like a glove—and for the life of me could not see why, when the play was staged at the Criterion, it failed to attract audiences.

Speaking of the production, Clement Scott said, "It is quite certain that no living actor could do more justice to the hero Foggerty than Mr. Charles Wyndham, although in this instance his energy, his boundless spirits, and his nervous force were destined to meet with no reward. It often happens that an actor plays better than he has ever done before in an unsuccessful play, and this was unfortunately the case with Mr. Wyndham and *Foggerty's Fairy*.

"If ever acting could save a play, Mr. Wyndham would have done so in this instance; but the scheme was too elaborate, and the idea too hopelessly involved for any ordinary audience. I was permitted to read the play before it was produced, and I remembered to have roared over it, sitting in an easy chair before the fire, but I wondered anxiously at the time what the fate of such a daring idea would be when exposed to the glare of the theatre and handed over to the attention of the spectator, who is not always 'quick-witted.'"

No doubt there is much truth in this, as well as in the opinion of another critic who said, "Mr. Gilbert's

muse has for once run away with him. His new play overshoots the mark. That it brims over with cleverness, that its dialogue sparkles with wit, and that its plot is preposterous and whimsical, may be conceded. The whole is, however, too extravagant, and perplexes when it should amuse. So near excellence does it go, a feeling of disappointment is experienced at our inability to class it as a masterpiece."

As to the way in which it was rendered, let me once more quote Clement Scott.

"The acting of *Foggerty's Fairy*," he wrote, "was from first to last as admirable as could be found at the Palais Royal or any Parisian theatre. There is no comedy actress in Paris so good as Mrs. John Wood, or possessing half her magnetic and original humour, and it would be difficult to find better representatives of their characters than Mr. George Giddens and Miss Mary Rorke, who promises to be one of our best actresses of mingled humour and pathos."

The interesting cast also included Mrs. Alfred Mellon, Mr. Alfred Maltby — within his own limits an excellent comedian—and quaint William Blakeley, who had been one of Sothern's closest adherents.

Personally, I have always felt that *Foggerty's Fairy* found its way into the Criterion bill at the wrong time. Charles Wyndham had accustomed his audiences to seek in him the rattle-brain hero of the three-act, irresponsible farce, and certainly they could not wish for better entertainment. The time was not yet ripe for the change that I think was already longed for in his heart of hearts. His "kind friends in front" wanted nothing subtle

from him. They were never tired of seeing the most mercurial and exhilarating actor of his day lightly skimming over thin ice, and keeping them in a continual simmer of merriment.

I think my theory is proved by the chorus of applause with which the revival of *The Great Divorce Case* was now received. Here I shall again let my old friend Clement Scott speak for me :—

“I have seldom,” he wrote, “seen a farce so admirably acted as *The Great Divorce Case*, at the Criterion, by Mr. Charles Wyndham and his clever company. It goes with one scream from end to end, and the audience is honestly amused. Mr. Wyndham’s appearance with the dead dog, dishevelled and battered, and the mild explanation, ‘I have had a little difference of opinion with the dog,’ is exquisitely ludicrous. Mrs. John Wood has but a small part, but is inimitable in it. Mr. Herbert Standing and Mr. Alfred Maltby are at their best. Mr. Wyndham might successfully revive many more of his Criterion farces.”

That sums up the situation. However anxious the actor might be to grapple with work that he held to be of a higher class, he had to pay the penalty of his own success.

And he did it with a right good will. Before saying good-bye to my old friend *Foggerty*, I must relate a little anecdote connected with its production. When he is studying a new part Charles Wyndham loves to ramble about the country roads in the vicinity of his own home, repeating the words to himself, and thinking out the business with which they were to be accompanied.

Now in the last act of *Foggerty's Fairy* the sorely perplexed hero is supposed to be mad, and in a wild scene he had to talk frantically about a murder of which he is imagined to be guilty. This, of course, gave plenty of scope for gesticulation and voice-play, and finding himself alone in a solitary spot somewhere between Hampstead and Highgate, he began to rehearse aloud. Two farm labourers, screened from him by a hedge, and unseen by him, looked at him and listened to him in terrified dismay, and he was at the height of his heroics when a stealthy policeman, who had probably had his eye on this curious mumbling, muttering gentleman for some time, arrested him, whether as a supposed-to-be-escaped lunatic, or as a murderer making open confession of his crime, is not quite clear. It was some time before he could induce the zealous officer to believe in his identity, but he did so at last, gave him some passes to the theatre, and all ended well.

The next novelty at the Criterion was *Fourteen Days*, a three-act farcical comedy, very brightly adapted by H. J. Byron from *Un Voyage d'Agrément*, by MM. Goudinet and Bisson. It was well constructed and smartly written. Not even Mrs. Grundy could take exception to the purity of its motive, and it was generally voted exceedingly amusing and an admirable piece of its kind. It was brilliantly acted by a company now perfectly trained to this class of work, and in Peregrine Porter Charles Wyndham found a part that suited his earlier methods well. As a leading critic pointed out, he showed us a real man in a state of perplexity, and his shiftiness, his attempts to seize upon means of evasion,

and his preposterous explanations, were conceivable and real. In short, while you laughed at him, you sympathised with him, especially when he looked so pathetically yet comically miserable in his prison dress. He was excellently supported by a company that now included Miss Mary Rorke, Miss Kate Rorke, Miss Emily Vining, Herbert Standing, William Blakeley, George Giddens, A. M. Dennison, and Lytton Sothern, the eldest son of E. A. Sothern.

Poor Lytton Sothern! What a handsome young fellow he was, and what a capital actor of light comedy parts! His early death is still an unhealed sore in the hearts of those who knew and loved him. Herbert Standing gave an especially clever rendering of the character of a gaol-governor endowed with æsthetic tastes, for these were the days of Du Maurier's Poselthwaite and Maudle, the worship of the lily and the peacock's feather, and the cult of blue china.

In the early spring of the same year we find Charles Wyndham, ever ready to help others, appearing at a recital given at the Marlborough Rooms by Miss Rose Kenny, the clever daughter of the highly esteemed and much lamented Charles Lamb Kenny. He acted with that young lady in a scene from Sheridan Knowles' good old play, *The Hunchback*, and gave his hearers premonition of the latent force within him, and the change in his style that was to come. I can never think of *The Hunchback* without recalling a story that another Wyndham—Robert Wyndham, of Edinburgh renown—told me.

In the days of his youth, when he was one of the

handsomest young actors on the stage, he was entrusted with the character of Sir Thomas Clifford in a cast that included the author as Master Walter. Conscientious as he was, he endeavoured to grasp, not only his own character, but the entire meaning of the play, and for the very life of him he could not make out whether Sir Thomas was a party to, or innocent of, the harmless plot designed to bring out Julia in her true colours. In his anxiety he went to the fountain-head and consulted Sheridan Knowles himself. "Good gracious, my dear fellow, *I don't know!*" said the author of the play, and the plot within the play—"what do you think about it yourself?"

And to this day the point remains a mystery.

In 1883 the Criterion was condemned to undergo structural alterations, and, banished from his London home, Charles Wyndham made a memorable tour in America. London lamented his absence, and every playgoer felt with Clement Scott when he wrote—

"It seems to me a great misfortune to the Criterion Theatre that Mr. Charles Wyndham has been compelled to give up temporarily the direction of this merry little playhouse. For many a long year he has been the life and soul of the place. From this I do not at all mean to infer that the plays are one-part plays, or could exist without an admirable company. But Mr. Wyndham was the oil that greased the machinery."

But if London grieved, America rejoiced, and the actor-manager's English friends were delighted to hear of his distinguished and emphatic success on "the other side." He opened with his company in *Fourteen Days*,

and this was followed up by *Brighton*, and all New York crowded to see as good an actor in his time as the Mother Country can turn out. He was considered there, what he had been for years considered here, a first-class comedian.

Among the actors who supported him one of the most popular seems to have been quaint William Blakeley, of whom I have already made brief mention. He deserves, however, more than a passing word of notice. His well-restrained but ever mirth-provoking personality, his droll methods, and insidious yet always comic voice, will always be remembered by those who saw him on the stage. It is difficult to think of such a hall-marked comedian being called upon to play the part of an almost tragic character, and yet such an event is within my recollection. In the earlier days of his theatrical career William Blakeley had been a member of the stock company at the old Theatre Royal, Birmingham. At that historic playhouse it was the custom on the Saturday nights of many years ago to play quite a series of startling dramas of *The Bottle*, *Thirty Years of a Gambler's Life*, and *The Murder in the Red Barn* type, and the better they were known, the better the enthusiastic Birmingham pits and galleries liked them. Blakeley's parts were always expected to be comic or "character" ones, but on one occasion he was cast to appear as a very serious old man in a drama of thrilling interest. The action of the play demanded that he should curse a wastrel son, and then, as the act-drop descended fall dead upon the stage as the result of his virtuous wrath and undue exertion.

At rehearsal Blakeley frankly told the stage manager that he was not equal to this violent scene, that to expire in agony was outside his range of business, and that if he was to play the part at all the episode must be cut out of it.

"Certainly not," said the manager, who was short-handed, and found it difficult to cast his plays—"it's one of the most telling things in the piece ; you'll do it to perfection and make a name for yourself as an actor who can play tragedy as well as comedy. We'll have you out as King Lear before the season's over."

Blakeley held his own views on that subject, but as he could not afford to throw up his engagement, he walked away in his meekest manner to arrange a death-scene of his own. If he had to die, he would at least do it as comfortably as he could.

A friendly property man promised him his aid, and, much to the stage manager's wrath, when it came to the great death-scene, an apparently superfluous chair occupied the centre of the stage. But he had not noticed it until the curtain was up, and there was nothing to be done.

In due course, and in his essentially comic voice, Blakeley vehemently cursed his dissolute son, and then, instead of taking full advantage of the situation—simulating a fit, and with a heavy back-fall dying in intense agony to the strains of soft music—seated himself in his chair with his back to the audience, and as the act-drop fell, seemed to be composing himself for a quiet nap.

The audience, knowing by heart every situation of the piece, instantly took the humorous view of things,

and yelled with laughter, but the stage manager was exceedingly wroth.

"Well," said Blakeley, in response to diatribes, and in his mildest style, "you see, I did the best I could ; but I thought you were wrong when you said I could play tragedy. At the same time, to oblige you I'll study King Lear, and I might do it for your benefit."

Never again during that Birmingham engagement was Blakeley asked to play anything approaching a serious character. He lived to act many parts, and he impersonated them all conscientiously and well. I think the most impressive thing I ever saw him do was his impersonation of Fox Bromley, in Westland Marston's comedy, *The Favourite of Fortune*, when Sothern first took that piece on tour. This really was a marvellous piece of character acting, richly droll, and yet what the Scotch would call "uncanny."

Other members of his company on that American tour were Miss Rose Saker, Miss Rose Norreys, Miss E. Vining, and George Giddens.

Miss Norreys, who was a most charming actress, will be well remembered as the original heroine of A. W. Pinero's delightful comedy, *Sweet Lavender*. Her sadly early death was deplored by thousands who had learned to look for her winsome presence on the stage. During Charles Wyndham's absence in America, and at other times, plays were produced at the Criterion in which he found no part for himself, but all bore evidence of his mastery of all things connected with stage direction. These included, among others, repeated revivals of F. C. Burnand's brilliant adaptation from the French,

known far and wide as *Betsy*; *Flats*, from the witty and prolific pen of G. R. Sims; and James Albery's clever adaptations, *Little Miss Muffit*, and *Featherbrain*; but in these pages I propose only to make special note of those plays in which the indefatigable actor-manager appeared.

In April, 1884, he was again in Piccadilly, playing Bob Sackett, in *Brighton*, as merrily as ever, and in a theatre provided with new exits, and illuminated by electricity—an immense improvement in that little underground house to the gas that had hitherto sufficed; and in the November of the same year he was ready with a new part.

This was Viscount Oldacre, in *The Candidate*, adapted from *Le Député de Bombignac* of M. Alexandre Bisson. This was a striking success, and I cannot refrain from recalling the outline of its plot.

Lord Oldacre, always endeavouring to fly from the monotony of his own home, where he is bored to death by a mother-in-law who dabbles in politics, sees an excellent opportunity for a fortnight in town in a request which is made to him to contest a vacancy in Easthampton. He packs off his private secretary, Alaric Baffin, to represent him in that township, while he packs his portmanteau to revel in liberty for a few brief days. But Baffin is a Radical of the reddest dye, while Lord Oldacre is a blue-blooded Conservative. The luckless Baffin arrives at Easthampton, determined to serve his friend and master at the sacrifice of his own political convictions. But alas! he is met at the station by a mob 10,000 strong, who ask him, with a howl, if he is prepared to abolish the House of Lords, what sort

of brick he likes best, and so on. He is hustled off to address the raging multitude, forgets his master, and pours the socialistic Baffin upon them. And Baffin, still impersonating Lord Oldacre, wins the election. Meanwhile, the butterfly peer has his run in town, and returns home at the appointed time, taking it for granted he is at the bottom of the poll. Baffin is invisible, and he is at his wits' end what to say to the inquiries of his household until the nervous secretary appears. The explanation which ensues between the two is by far the best thing in the play. Lord Oldacre's expression of horror when he hears he has been elected as a Radical, Mr. Baffin's grave air of deprecation, his sketch of those terrible fellows at Easthampton, were admirable bits of acting. "Advocate the preservation of the peers with a water-butt close by!—it was not to be done for a moment," cried Baffin in reply to the reproaches of the raging Oldacre. Mother-in-law and wife see the horrible news in the papers, and discover that the miserable Oldacre's portmanteau is labelled "Euston." Driven to bay, the erratic peer defies his mother-in-law, hurls (metaphorically) her politics at her head, bids her go, and is taken back to the bosom of his wife. Baffin is forgiven, and Lord Oldacre applies for the Chiltern Hundreds.

As to the acting, I will quote the words of an eminent critic, who said :—

"Mr. Wyndham, perhaps the first comedian on the English stage, excelled himself as Lord Oldacre. He has done nothing better and no one could do anything so good ; for acting of this kind nothing better could

be found. An immediate contrast to him is Mr. George Giddens, an actor who has never been quite sufficiently appreciated. His description of his visit to East-hampton, and his reception there, is one of the funniest things heard on the stage for some time. Miss Rose Saker is always bright and welcome. Miss Fanny Coleman was well chosen for the acidulated mother-in-law. Mr. Blakeley and Mr. Maltby cannot fail to be funny. Mr. Gregory promises well as a light comedian ; but amongst the ladies the gem of the performance was Miss Kate Rorke."

Thus *The Candidate* at once took the town, and not only had a long run, but seemed to have some of those qualities, so rare in modern plays, of the evergreen. Writing of its revival in 1894, William Archer said :—

"It amused us quite as much last Wednesday as it did ten years ago, by reason of the inherent whimsicality of its situations and the undiminished brilliancy of Mr. Wyndham's performance. In irresponsible, irrepressible, light comedy he remains easily first."

It is curious to think nowadays that prior to its production Charles Wyndham had little or no faith in *The Candidate*. He anticipated a short run for it, and hesitated for a considerable period before he ventured upon its production ; but on the first night there came such a spontaneous outburst of applause that he realised that he had once more unearthed a treasure.

And this for a piece that was rehearsed and produced within a period of ten days ! Surely, considering the expectations of West End audiences, a phenomenal undertaking.

At first the name of the adapter of the successful play was concealed, but it soon became known that the lucky writer was Mr. Justin Huntley McCarthy. *The Candidate* ran from November 22nd, 1884, to January 16th, 1886.

By this time Charles Wyndham was in a very enviable position. He was at the head of a company that, thanks to his example and training, was acknowledged to be as good in light comedy and farcical pieces as that of the far-famed Palais Royal, his personal popularity was unbounded, and his pretty little play-house was always full. There was certainly no need to change his policy, and, indeed, it would seem a risky thing to do so. Surely if any man had a right to feel satisfied with the success he had made it was he; and yet, loving his art as he did, he felt that he ought to aim at work of a more serious type. Ever since *Brighton* had made its mark other actors and managers had been busily at work with three-act farcical comedies, and though they never came within reach of his excellence, he had in a way taught his comrades of the stage to play his own game. He now, as every true actor should, desired to show them and the public that he could draw tears as well as laughter. It was a bold step, but he, honestly and rightly, believed it to be the wise one to take, and in order to fulfil his artistic ambition he was prepared to run the risk that it involved.

That it was a risk is beyond all doubt. The public, as a whole, are not very sensible in such matters. If a Royal Academician whose name was famous as a painter of portraits suddenly exhibited a beautiful landscape, or

if a writer of very serious books unexpectedly published a light novel, thousands of self-appointed and self-sufficient critics would be heard muttering such words as "great mistake," "out of his line," and "why doesn't the cobbler stick to his last?"

Such was the ordeal that Charles Wyndham had to undergo when he dropped the frivolity he had taught people to delight in and without thought of cost devoted himself to the higher-toned work that he loved.

CHAPTER V

WILD OATS RE-SOWN

THE change—as changes often do—came about suddenly and in an unexpected way. Charles Wyndham was rehearsing another farcical comedy, and had got within two days of its advertised first night, when he made up his mind that it could not be a success. With characteristic frankness he announced that, having no faith in the piece, he should withdraw it, and then he had to make up his mind what to put in its place. A revival of *Brighton* occurred to him, and then he be-thought himself of his old love, *Wild Oats*. His desire to appear once more as the dashing, reckless, yet sympathetic Rover was strong upon him, and in a happy moment he yielded to it.

As the production proved a turning-point in his career, some notes concerning a play that is half forgotten by the present generation of theatre-goers seem necessary in these pages.

Of its first production at Covent Garden in 1791 Mrs. Inchbald said of it and its poor blind author :—

“The present comedy is written by O’Keeffe, who saw not the traces of his pen as he marked the paper ; whose days pass away uncheered by the sun or any visible object ; but whose mind supports with resignation his

bitter calamity, and is enlightened with imagination, whilst his eyes are shut in utter darkness.

“Were each close imitator of an author’s style punishable by law, like the perpetrator of other wrongs, Mr. O’Keeffe might have been an independent, though not a happy man ; for that source of a new kind of mirth, termed by some exquisite nonsense, of which he was the first discoverer, made the town so merry, that, like good wine, he might have sold it at any price ; but this rich juice of hilarity, polluted by the false spirit of imitation, at length gave stupor to those whom the beverage had before revived ; and the pure and the adulterated became distasteful together.”

Oddly enough, this looks as if Mrs. Inchbald had a premonition of what might be crossing Charles Wyndham’s mind in 1886.

“The comedy,” she continues, “is the only attempt of the author to produce a drama above opera and farce. His productions, in the latter species of writing, are perfect compositions ; nothing of the kind can be superior to his *Agreeable Surprise* and his *Son-in-Law*. He has a number of other farces of little less attraction—such as *Peeping Tom*. Another class after that, and each possessing infinite fancy. Still success did not follow all his productions ; a few years past he wrote very frequently and sometimes too hastily.

“On the first night of representing any of those whimsical dramas, amidst loud peals of laughter at the comic dialogue or incidents, there was generally a most affecting spectacle behind the curtain. O’Keeffe, stone-blind (not an affliction of birth, but of late years), was led

by his little son as a guide down to the stage-door, to the lock of which he would anxiously place his ear to catch the quickest information how his work was received ; and when, unhappily, hisses from the audience would sound louder than applause, in strong agitation he would press his hands to each side of his head, as if he had yet one sense too much. Then he would remain, without sight or hearing, until some unexpected sally of humour in his drama once more put the house in a good temper, and they would begin to laugh and applaud ; on which his son, rapid as lightning, would pull him by the elbow, and cry out, 'Now, father, listen again !' *Wild Oats* would not disgrace an author of much higher pretensions in dramatic writing than Mr. O'Keeffe. There is a great pleasantry throughout the play, many natural touches of simplicity, and some well-written dialogues and sentiments. The plot is interesting, the characters new, or at least in new situations, and the whole forms an evening's entertainment for an auditor of taste—such a one having, at the same time, in his memory certain popular sentences from certain well-known comedies and tragedies ; for without intimate acquaintance with all the quotations made use of by the hero of the piece, it must totally lose its effect, and its hero appear like a madman.¹

"Perhaps no comedy, on the first night, was ever more fortunate in a list of excellent comic actors to represent the characters.

"Lewis, in *Rover*, fervid as usual, seemed so en-

¹ Here Mrs. Inchbald was wrong. *Rover* was always popular, even with those who did not quite understand his quotations.



Photo by London Stereoscopic Company, Cheapside, E.C.

SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM IN "WILD OATS"

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amoured of his stage exploits, that every spectator forgave him his folly for the bewitching ardour with which he pursued it. In Ephraim, the Quaker, the spirit moved Munden—as it always does—to act just as he should do. Quick was on the London stage when this piece was first performed, and though Sir George Thunder was by no means a part best suited to his abilities, yet Quick gave comic importance to all he undertook. Thomas Blanchard, since dead, played the little part of Sim with wondrous skill. Mrs. Pope (once Miss Young) was excellent in Lady Amaranth. And the silly Jane can never have so good a representative as Mrs. Wells.”

Rover, it will be remembered, is a travelling player, who, greatly to the embarrassment of those with whom he is conversing, interlards his conversation with scraps from the various pieces in which he has performed. In consequence of quoting from the *Rehearsal* the words, “I am the bold Thunder,” he is taken for Harry Thunder, a son of Sir George Thunder, who has run away from school to join some strolling actors. He is dragged perforce to the house of Lady Amaranth, a fair Quakeress, whose heart he wins. Very amusing complications follow, and in the end Rover is made happy with his bride; Sir George discovering that Rover is indeed not the son for whom he was in search, but another son long lost and now happily recovered.

In spite of its apparent levity, the character of the strolling player has in it the element of romance, and it is no wonder that it proved attractive to an actor of Charles Wyndham’s temperament.

As I have already hinted in these pages, I always associate the dialogue in Rover's opening scene with the new departure at the Criterion.

For the moment I think of Bob Sackett as Rover, and Charles Wyndham as Harry Thunder, their meeting at the cross-roads, and the following talk between them :—

Harry. Our trunks are booked at the inn for the Winchester coach.

Rover. "Ay, to foreign climates my old trunk I bear." But I prefer walking to the car of Thespis.

Harry. Which is the way ?

Rover. Here.

Harry. Then I go there. [Pointing opposite.

Rover. Eh ?

Harry. My dear boy, on this spot, and at this moment, we must part.

Rover. Part ?

Harry. Rover, you wish me well ?

Rover. Well, and suppose so. Part, eh ? What mystery and grand ? What are you at ? Do you forget, you, Midge, and I are engaged to Truncheon, the manager, and that the bills are already up with our names to-night to play at Winchester ?

Harry. Jack, you and I have often met on a stage in assumed characters ; if it's your wish we should ever meet again in our real ones, of sincere friends, without asking whither I go, or my motives for leaving you, when I walk up this road, do you turn down that.

Rover. Joke !

Harry. I'm serious. Good-bye !

Rover. If you repent your engagement with Truncheon, I'll break off, too, and go with you wherever——

[*Takes him under his arm.*

Harry. Attempt to follow me, and even our acquaintance ends.

Rover. Eh ?

Harry. Don't think of my reasons, only that it must be.

Rover. Have I done anything to Dick Buskin?¹ Leave me ! [*Turns and puts his handkerchief to his eyes.*

Harry. I am as much concerned as you to—— Good-bye !

Rover. I can't even bid him—I won't either—if any cause could have given—— Farewell.

Harry. Bless my poor fellow ! Adieu ! [*Silently weeps.*
[*Exeunt several ways.*

Yes, I am convinced that it was not without emotion that Charles Wyndham said an unconditional good-bye to Bob Sackett, and set himself to exploit a new and intricate stage-land.

But on the occasion of the production of *Wild Oats* in the bijou home of farcical comedy Charles Wyndham had not only the anxiety of his new venture on his mind, but a great difficulty to surmount. The Criterion Theatre in those days had no accommodation for the admission of scenery. It had all to be carried in pieces through the front of the house, taken over the footlights, and then put together and completed. The production of *Wild Oats* necessitated eleven changes of scene, and therefore was pronounced by the stage-

¹ Dick Buskin was Harry Thunder's stage name.

manager and the master carpenter to be almost an impossibility. Charles Wyndham, however, was determined to persevere, and all the staff entered into the work with enthusiasm and did their best, with this result, that the first promise of a scenic rehearsal was for noon on the day of production. My readers need not be told that, as a rule, a scenic rehearsal takes place a week beforehand. The men worked all through the previous night, and right through the day itself, Charles Wyndham leaving the theatre about four in the morning and coming back at noon for the completion of the preparations—but, alas! he had to sit patiently for six and a half hours in the stalls waiting for this rehearsal. At half-past six in the evening it began, and it goes without saying that the hour for opening the theatre had arrived before he was a quarter through with it. Pushing matters as quickly as he possibly could, he determined to keep the doors shut till he was better prepared. The result, however, after half an hour, was a furious storm of protest among the crowd waiting to go into the pit and gallery, which at last grew so violent that he had to give permission for these two entrances to be thrown open. In came the surging, angry crowd of pitites and galleryites. There was no mistaking their attitude. They were quite as stormy inside the theatre as they had been outside, for to add to their discomfort it had been raining during the time they had been kept there. In the midst of this tumult and noise Charles Wyndham appeared before them, and told them he was going to take them into his confidence before he admitted the rest of the audience into the theatre. He

explained to them that he had been trying to put an elephant into a bandbox, and the difficulties were very great, as they themselves would see when the piece began. He asked them, in the event of any obstacles or any delays, to stand by him. This appeal to the best part of their nature was immediately successful. They shouted that they would, and kept their word. The drowsy carpenters worked hard also, and though only half the scenes had been rehearsed, the performance went with comparative smoothness, and the pit and gallery cheered it into a lasting success.

Boxes, stalls, and dress circle were equally generous with their applause, and the latest production of *Wild Oats* was voted a complete success, not only by those who knew the history of the play and understood its merits, but by the great majority who had never seen it before. It was beautifully staged, the tasteful scenery and furniture accurately displaying the period of its action, and the picturesque and equally accurate costumes greatly adding to the richness of the picture. The programme is an historic one, and must be included in these pages.

As we have seen, Mrs. Inchbald said of the first performance of *Wild Oats* at Covent Garden in 1791 :—

“Perhaps no comedy, on a first night, was ever more fortunate in a list of excellent comic actors to represent the characters”; and certainly the historian of the modern stage is justified in using the same words in connection with the production of the play at the Criterion on May 29th, 1886.

It always seems a pity that O’Keefe’s little son could

THE CRITERION THEATRE.

Lessee and Manager, MR. CHARLES WYNDHAM.

Every Evening,

The celebrated old Comedy, in Three Acts,

WILD OATS,

By JOHN O'KEEFE.

Rover	MR. CHARLES WYNDHAM.
John Dory	MR. DAVID JAMES.
Sir George Thunder	MR. EDWARD RIGHTON.
Ephraim Smooth	MR. WILLIAM BLAKELEY.
Lamp	MR. ALFRED MALTEY.
Sim	MR. GEORGE GIDDENS.
Harry Thunder	MR. W. E. GREGORY.
Banks	MR. W. BARRON.
Farmer Gammon	MR. A. BERNARD.
Trap	MR. J. R. SHERMAN.
Twitch	MR. F. G. DAEBISHIRE.
Landlord of the Sun Inn	MR. F. M. STANLEY.
Ruffians	MESSRS. EMERY, PERCY, and JONES.
Amelia	MISS FROLIOTT PAGET.
Rachel	MISS MAY SCARLETT.
Jane	MISS ANNIE HUGHES.
Milkmaid	MISS M. KENNEDY.
Lady Amaranth	MISS MARY MOORE.

Act I. Tableau 1. Drawing-room at Lady Amaranth's.
 „ 2. Road on the way to Winchester.

„ 3. Parlour of the Sun Inn.
 Act II. Tableau 1. Drawing-room at Lady Amaranth's.
 „ 2. Parlour of the Sun Inn.
 „ 3. Drawing-room at Lady Amaranth's.

Act III. Drawing-room at Lady Amaranth's.

N.B.—The tableau curtains will not be down longer than about half a minute on each occasion.

Preceded at eight by the Comic Drama, in Two Acts, entitled—

BRAVE HEARTS,

By ARTHUR MATTHISON.

Marquis de Chateau Laroche	MR. W. E. GREGORY.
Mr. Robins	MR. F. M. STANLEY.
Albert	MR. J. R. SHERMAN.
Tibbets	MR. GEORGE GIDDENS.
Mrs. Sanderson	MISS F. PAGET.
Dorine	MISS ANNIE HUGHES.

The attention of the public is called to the fact that seats can be booked at the Box Office at all hours during the day, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Private Boxes, £3 3s., £2 2s., and £1 11s. 6d. Stalls, 10/6. Dress Circle, 7/- and 5/-. Family Circle, 3/-. Pit, 2/6. Gallery, 1/-.

Doors open at 7.30. To commence at 8 o'clock.

The Spinnet used in *Wild Oats* kindly lent for the occasion by Messrs. Kirkman and Co., of Soho.

During the progress of the Comedy selections of old English music by the orchestra, under the direction of MR. H. SANGSTER.

New Scenery by BRUCE SMITH.

not be waiting at the Piccadilly "stage door" to carry to the poor blind author the glorious news of the enthusiasm with which the revival of his almost century-old work was received.

Truly it was an excellent cast !

By the power and even pathos that he contrived to mingle with the sprightliness of the volatile and versatile Rover, Charles Wyndham astonished even his warmest admirers, and no doubt they liked to see the ease with which he bore himself in the picturesque costumes of the eighteenth century. His personal victory was immediately secured. Then Edward Righton was admirably placed as the blustering Sir George Thunder, and William Blakeley made a perfect oily study of the sanctimonious hypocrite, Ephraim Smooth. As the theatrical manager Camp, and as the rustic Sim, Mr. Alfred Maltby and Mr. George Giddens were, in their respective ways, equally good ; and as the old "sea-dog," John Dory, David James made one of the great hits of his very notable career. Truly it was said of him that on this occasion he seemed imbued with all the spirit of old comedy acting. There was a roguish geniality about his portrayal of the old salt which was admirable. He managed to sink his individuality, and, indeed, by a wonderfully good "make up," to become, not David James acting, but John Dory, bluff, honest, and hearty, and never too boisterous. It was one of those things calculated to leave a lasting impression on the minds of all who were fortunate enough to witness it. Notwithstanding Mrs. Inchbald's praise of the Silly Jane depicted by Mrs. Wells, I cannot believe that the part was

ever better represented than by Miss Annie Hughes, one of the brightest, best, prettiest, and daintiest of English comedy actresses ; and the Lady Amaranth—well, the Lady Amaranth was Miss Mary Moore, and of her I have something to say in my next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

MISS MARY MOORE

YES, the Lady Amaranth of the cast was Miss Mary Moore, and she at once revealed herself as one of the most delightful and accomplished of English actresses. The part is not an easy one to play, but she endowed it with a peculiar charm and invested it with a sympathy that were alike invaluable. Her sweet face suggested all that is beautiful and pure in woman, and her acting was at once captivating and beyond criticism. In a single night she conquered London playgoers, and took her position as one of the leading artists of the West End stage. Attired in simple Quaker costume, she was a picture to look upon, and there was a natural sweetness and simplicity about her acting well suited to the part. Truly did a critic say, "Few of those who saw Miss Moore in this character will soon forget her musical intonation of a catch-phrase, 'my pleasant cousin,' given to Lady Amaranth." For myself, I may say, I shall never forget it.

To London theatre-goers her triumph came as a great surprise. She had been seen in a little piece called *Cupid in Camp*, and in a small part in a three-act farce entitled *The Man with Three Wives*, adapted from

the French *Trois Femmes pour un Mari*, by Charles Marsham Rae. This came after the withdrawal of *The Candidate*, but Charles Wyndham did not take part in it.

Prior to these not very important appearances, Miss Mary Moore's stage experiences had been few. When only sixteen years of age she was married to James Albery, who then seemed to be face to face with the brightest of careers. As we have seen in these pages, he had somewhat handicapped his own chances by the extreme brilliance of his first success. Whenever his name was associated with a new play, playgoers always eagerly anticipated a second *Two Roses*, and were somewhat unreasonably irritated because they did not quite get it. No doubt this was a trouble to him. His was the artistic temperament: his sensitive nature, having once tasted the exquisite delights of a unique success, writhed under the idea of being written down a failure. Of course, to say nothing of his other original work—and some of it was remarkably good—his clever adaptations at the Criterion Theatre bore witness to the fact that he was anything but that. But he desired to excel again in a comedy for which he would be solely responsible—a comedy by the side of which even his own *Two Roses* would pale and droop their heads; and feeling himself baffled in this difficult task, he fell ill, and the pen that could achieve so much dropped from his poor tired hand and was silent.

Thus the Albery household became sapped of its resources. We all remember what good old Simon Ingot of Robertson's creation said to David Garrick: "Mr. Garrick, I wasn't always a rich man. . . . I had

four hundred a year. At Bombay I married the daughter of a lieutenant in the British army; he was of high family, but had no money; plenty of blue blood, but no cash. He gave his blessing, and his daughter brought me a dower of virtue and obedience. Well, his blessing, my wife's virtue and obedience, and my four hundred a year, all added together, only made four hundred a year. Still, we were happy, very happy, but it wasn't to last long."

On similar lines thousands of young married couples are happy, very happy, but when the four hundred a year, or whatever it may be, is at vanishing point, it is bad to look out upon the uncertain and, for the time being, impenetrable darkness of the future.

In the days of *Two Roses* successful dramatists were not so munificently rewarded as they are to-day, and even if it had been so it is possible that poor, impetuous, vivacious, and sanguine James Albery would not have been the man to make much provision for the future. Be this as it may, the cost of his long and serious illness, coupled with his enforced idleness, made serious inroads upon his resources, and the time came when the anxious young wife felt that for the sake of husband and child she must turn breadwinner.

In her trouble she consulted her intimate friend, Mrs. Bronson Howard (Charles Wyndham's sister), and she very strongly advised her to tempt fortune on the stage. In order to give her advice practical value (how seldom that is done!) she used her influence with her brother, with the result that in March, 1885, "Miss Mary Moore"—it is the name by which she is

known and popular with the public, and it is the name that she will henceforth bear in these pages — was engaged to play a small part in *The Candidate* with a touring company that had been sent out to exploit the great London success.

Charles Wyndham was not with this company, and it must have been a sad experience for the young wife to settle down to new work among strange people, and to travel about from town to town after the somewhat rough and comfortless touring company fashion. But she had a brave spirit, and took comfort in the thought that she was earning a much-needed salary. Possibly, too, she plumed herself a little on finding out that she had the ability to make her own way in the world. But even in the modest position she had attained she was not to remain untroubled.

When the tour commenced she was given the understudy of the *ingénue*, with the promise that she should play it in two or three weeks' time, when the actress who was then impersonating it would return to London; but when five weeks had gone by, and this programme was not carried out, she began to realise that she was not drawing her weekly stipend because she really earned it or was worth it, but inasmuch as, having listened to his sister's appeal, Charles Wyndham had given her her engagement and her salary out of sheer good nature. The bare thought of this was horrible to her: her pride was deeply wounded, and, heedless of time and expense, she at once travelled to London to learn the truth from her manager, and, if necessary, resign her engagement. For, as she truly said to Charles

Wyndham, "Much as I appreciate your kindness, your giving me a salary now will not help me to earn a livelihood in the future—it is work and experience I need." In that gracious, ever kindly and tactful presence she found consolation, and, with a relieved mind, returned to her work, and was given a part for the rest of that tour.

In the October of that year Charles Wyndham brought his London company to Liverpool to appear with him in his famous impersonation of Viscount Oldacre in that diverting play, and the actress who had played Lady Oldacre being taken ill, Miss Moore was sent for to take the part. Surprised at, and appreciating her marked ability, he at once engaged her for the Criterion. He had cast her for a good part in that poor farcical comedy that never was played, and it was while rehearsing it that it struck him that if he revived *Wild Oats* she would make a charming Lady Amaranth.

Never was there happier thought. As we have seen, a success as marked as it was unusual was made, and from that day forth her name has prominently figured in the Charles Wyndham playbills. Indeed, both in town and in country, to say nothing of America, St. Petersburg, and Berlin—where she played in the German language—she has long been regarded as his bright particular star companion. The long course of her histrionic victories will be duly traced in this narrative, but I must refer incidentally in this chapter to her sweet rendering of the character of Ada Ingot in *David Garrick*.

When Sothorn first appeared in Robertson's ever-green comedy at the Haymarket, the Ada of the cast

was pretty and clever Miss Nelly Moore, and when I first saw Miss Mary Moore play the part at the Criterion I could not help being struck, not only with the similarity of the names, but the infinite charm and intense feminine earnestness with which each actress contrived to invest a character that might be—nay, sometimes has been—easily overplayed and ruined.

I remember that as I walked home from the little Piccadilly Theatre in the fogs of the November of 1886 I recalled some lines that, parodying Edgar Allan Poe, witty Henry S. Leigh had written after a similar evening at the Haymarket in the days of long ago. They seem so appropriate to the new occasion that I will quote them here. It should be explained that *The Castle of Andalusia* was the title of a play in which poor Nelly Moore had appeared at the Haymarket with Buckstone, Henry Compton, Chippendale, William Farren, and other members of a once famous company in 1864.

CHATEAUX D'ESPAGNE

A REMINISCENCE OF "DAVID GARRICK" AND "THE CASTLE OF ANDALUSIA"

"Once upon an evening weary, shortly after Lord Dundreary
With his quaint and curious humour set the town in such a roar,
With my shilling I stood rapping—only very gently tapping—
For the man in charge was napping—at the money-taker's door.
It was Mr. Buckstone's playhouse, where I linger'd at the door;
Paid half-price and nothing more.

"Most distinctly I remember—it was just about September—
Though it might have been in August, or it might have been
before,
Dreadfully I fear'd the morrow. Vainly had I sought to
borrow;

For (I own it to my sorrow) I was miserably poor.
And the heart is heavy laden when one's miserably poor,
(I have been so once before).

“I was doubtful and uncertain, at the rising of the curtain,
If the piece would prove a novelty, or one I'd seen before;
For a band of robbers drinking in a gloomy cave, and clinking
With their glasses on the table, I had witness'd o'er and o'er;
Since the half-forgotten period of my innocence was o'er—
Twenty years ago or more.

“Presently my doubt grew stronger. I could stand the thing
no longer :
'Miss,' I said, 'or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore.
Pardon my apparent rudeness. Would you kindly have the
goodness
To inform me if this drama is from Gaul's enlighten'd shore?'
For I know that plays are often brought us from the Gallic
shore,

Adaptations—nothing more !

“So I put the question lowly; and my neighbour answer'd
slowly,
'It's a British drama wholly, written quite in days of yore.
'Tis an Andalusian story of a castle old and hoary,
And the music is delicious, though the dialogue be poor !'
(And I could not help agreeing that the dialogue *was* poor,
Very flat, and nothing more.)

“But at last a lady enter'd, and my interest grew centred
In her figure, and her features, and the costume that she
wore.
And the slightest sound she utter'd was like music; so I
mutter'd
To my neighbour, 'Glance a minute at your playbill, I implore.
Who's that rare and radiant maiden? Tell, oh, tell me, I
implore.'

Quoth my neighbour, 'Nelly Moore.'

“Then I ask’d in quite a tremble—it was useless to dissemble—
 ‘Miss, or Madam, do not trifle with my feelings any more;
 Tell me who, then, was the maiden that appear’d so sorrow
 laden

In the room of David Garrick, with a bust above the door?’

(With a bust of Julius Cæsar up above the study door.)

Quoth my neighbour, ‘Nelly Moore.’

.

“I’ve her photograph from Lacy’s; that delicious little face is
 Smiling on me as I’m sitting (in a draught from yonder door),
 And often in the nightfalls, when a precious little light falls
 From the wretched tallow candles on my gloomy second-floor
 (For I have not got the gas-light on my gloomy second-floor),
 Comes an echo, ‘Nelly Moore!’”

Change the name of “Nelly” to “Mary,” and you will see how the Criterion Ada Ingot took the town in 1886. Poor James Albery died in 1889, but he lived to see his courageous wife one of the accepted celebrities of the stage he so dearly loved, and for which he had done so much admirable work.



Photo by Alfred Ellis and Walery, 51, Baker Street, W.

MISS MARY MOORE

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CHAPTER VII

DAVID GARRICK

HAVING made such a marked success as Rover, Charles Wyndham's next task was to find a worthy successor to that admirably drawn and very interesting character. It must, if possible, be something better, for he felt he could not retrace the bold step he had taken from the light farcical pieces in which he had excelled to the high comedy that he loved. Sympathising with him, his friends suggested that he should appear in Sothern's favourite part of David Garrick, in T. W. Robertson's charming comedy bearing that name. Since poor Sothern's premature death in the January of 1881, the piece had not been seen in London, and after a time, and with some reluctance, Charles Wyndham began to listen to the voices of his charmers. With some reluctance, because he felt it would be a very difficult thing to follow such a popular actor as Sothern in a part that he had made his own, and, I think, because he had been his intimate friend, and he felt a little delicacy in treading in his footsteps. He might have dismissed that thought from his mind, for poor Sothern used often to speak in open admiration of him and his

stage work, and, I am certain, would gladly have named him for his successor in a part that he dearly loved.

Of a comedy that has held the stage for more than forty years, that is as popular to-day as when it was first produced, and which is so closely identified with the name and fame of Charles Wyndham, some special note should surely be made in these pages.

Of its origin, the late Moy Thomas said :—

“The play is an acknowledged version of De Melesville’s *Sullivan*, one of a long series of dramas turning on the same idea, which was described by Théophile Gautier as ‘the everlasting story of Garrick, Talma, or Kean curing some foolish girl of a passion for them as actors by exhibiting themselves in private life under the most repulsive conditions.’ This description occurs in a criticism by Gautier in 1842 on a vaudeville called *Le Docteur Robin*, which happens to be the original of the little piece called *Doctor Davy*, in which Mr. Hermann Vezin has won renown. Gautier further tells us that this piece was based on a story by his friend and comrade of the famous “Gilet-rouge” fraternity, Joseph Bouchardy, and that seven or eight playwrights had at that time already laid their hands upon it. We have been at some pains to trace the story here referred to, and have found it in a novelette, entitled *Garrick Médecin*, published in Paris in an obscure evening paper, called *Le Monde Dramatique*, in April, 1836. Somewhere about the same time M. Fournier produced a one-act piece, called *Tiridate*, which is founded on the same notion, the only difference being that in this case it is not an actor, but an actress, who, at the sacrifice

of dignity and personal inclinations, undertakes the weaning process. It was in this piece that Mr. Charles Reade found the substance of his novelette and play, entitled *Art*, wherein Mrs. Stirling has so often played the part of the heroine, Mrs. Bracegirdle. Several other versions of *Tiridate* hold the stage, thanks to the energies of Mrs. John Wood, Miss Geneviève Ward, and other impersonators of the heroine;¹ and traces, more or less distinct, of the dramatic idea of *Garrick Médecin* are to be found in numerous modern pieces. It has, we are aware, been said that *Sullivan*, the direct original of *David Garrick*, was itself merely a translation of a German play; but in this there is, we believe, some confusion of fact. The German play referred to is probably Deinhardstein's *Garrick in Bristol*. Of this piece we are not able, unfortunately, to give any account; but it is certain there is an acknowledged translation of Melesville's *Sullivan*, by the dramatist Edward Jermann, which is well known on the German stage—a fact which would be hardly possible if *Sullivan* had been only a Frenchman's version of a German play."

Of what may be called the "English history" of *David Garrick* I can, thanks to my early intimacy with Robertson and Sothorn, speak with authority, and, inasmuch as it is a history that should make dramatists and actors persevere, it is worth relating.

Never was there play which was so nearly condemned

¹ My readers will, no doubt, remember how charmingly Miss Ellen Terry played the part, in her case named after the famous Mistress Nance Oldfield.

to oblivion, or, on its belated production, so nearly doomed to shipwreck. In those sad days when Robertson, vainly attempting to get any hearing for that original work of his that was destined to revolutionise the English stage, had, in order to keep body and soul together, to do any hack work that came in his way, he somehow found out the nearly forgotten French *Sullivan*, became engrossed in the subject, and out of it fashioned *David Garrick*. The usual thing followed: no one would look at it; and being sorely in need of money, he parted with it for an old song.

Sothorn came from America to England, and, delighted with his absolutely natural style of acting, Robertson thirsted to supply him with a character to follow the everlasting and inimitable Lord Dundreary. Sothorn on his side was only too anxious to find such a part; nervous actor and anxious dramatist met; *David Garrick* was discussed, and very soon half accepted. But, alas for the poor but always proud author! the piece was held in bond by Lacy, the theatrical bookseller, for the unattainable sum of ten pounds. Of course, to the ever open-handed, open-hearted Sothorn that little trouble was of no consequence, and I can easily conjure up the delicate tact with which he contrived to roll away the little cloud.

And so it came about that Robertson read his play to Buckstone (then the popular actor-manager of the Haymarket Theatre, and one of the leading lights of the London stage) and Sothorn, with the most satisfactory results. Sothorn was delighted with the idea of playing Garrick. Always anxious to appear in parts of an

earnest type, he felt he could make an enormous success out of the opportunities for serious acting that the first and last acts afforded, and he was certain he would do wonders with the now world-famous scene of simulated intoxication. For his part Buckstone (far too old for the character, but still an actor-manager) fancied himself as Squire Chivy; and when poor, delighted Robertson went home he had a cheque for fifty pounds in his pocket, with goodly promises of royalties whenever the piece should be produced at the Haymarket Theatre or elsewhere.

Sothorn always confessed himself to be the most nervous of actors, and in a new part he declared that he was "not worth thirty shillings a week." For this reason the piece, prior to its production in London, was tried by him in the country, its first representation being given at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Birmingham, in the early days of April, 1864. He was supported by the stock company, Miss Edith Stuart being the first Ada Ingot, and G. K. Maskell (a very excellent comedian) the original impersonator of Squire Chivy. When, a week later, Sothorn took the piece to Liverpool, the latter part was admirably played by Lionel Brough. This may well be imagined, for Brough was the best Tony Lumpkin of his day, probably of any day, and Robertson undoubtedly had Oliver Goldsmith's redoubtable booby in view when he drew his portrait of the unmannerly fox-hunting squire of the roystering days of King George III.

At the time of that fateful first night of *David Garrick*, Sothorn was staying with my father. Usually

buoyant in his spirits and brilliant in his conversation, he had been strangely silent during dinner, and I noticed that he seemed to have no appetite. Never shall I forget the dejected look with which, when the carriage that was to take him to the theatre was announced, he flung away his cigar and prepared to face his ordeal.

I had read that when he left his lodgings in Cecil Street (my dear old Cecil Street of many memories !) to appear for the first time as Shylock at Drury Lane, Edmund Kean's parting words to his wife were : "I wish I was going to be shot !" and I nervously wondered if Sothorn felt like that.

As he passed through the hall he stopped before a whip-rack, and selecting an old hunting-crop, asked if he might borrow it, as he said it would be the very thing for Garrick to carry in his hand when, in riding-dress, he made his first entrance.

Years after it was my great pleasure to present that hunting-crop to Charles Wyndham, and as Garrick he uses it at the present time.

In the days of 1864 I was a mere schoolboy, but my passion for the stage was already a source of good-natured family ridicule, and I was permitted to go to the theatre. Open-eared and open-eyed, I revelled in the story of David Garrick and Ada Ingot as it was first unfolded behind the footlights, and to my mind victory had easily been won all along the line. Evidently the packed and attentive audience thought so too, for there was no moment of hesitancy in the enthusiastic applause with which the piece, from the rise to the fall of the curtain, was greeted.

When we reached home that night and waited awhile for Sothern's return to supper, my father said joyously, "Dear old Ned ! He'll be wild with happiness to-night, for no doubt he has scored a brilliant triumph." Judge, then, of our amazement when a very despondent "Ned" entered the room, declaring that the play was a disastrous failure, and expressing a determination to try, at any cost, to get out of his engagement to appear in it again.

Probably there had been little first-night hitches behind the curtain of which the highly pleased audience knew nothing—indeed, in after years Sothern told me that it had been so—but there was absolutely no excuse for his abject depression except the fact that he was always, to use his own words, "a bundle of nerves" ; and as his intimate friends knew, at times a great self-tormentor.

What followed is a matter of stage history. On April 30th, 1864, with Buckstone as Squire Chivy, Chippendale as Simon Ingot, Mrs. Chippendale as Mrs. Smith, and Miss Nelly Moore as Ada Ingot, he played Garrick at the Haymarket Theatre, and made an instantaneous and striking hit. He still persisted that he had failed in his part, and that the piece was saved by the exquisite acting of Miss Nelly Moore. He soon found out, however, that he could play his new character as often as he pleased, not only in London, but in all the provincial cities and towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland, to say nothing of America, where, in due course, it enabled him to make another notable triumph.

No doubt, with him, the wonderful drunken scene,

clever in its conception and perfect in its detail, was the great feature of the piece; but though some critics took exception to his acting in the love scenes with Ada Ingot, he gained in them a vast multitude of admirers. Generally willing to accept the verdict of the Press, Sothorn was always rather sensitive with regard to this alleged defect in his performance, and I remember on one occasion, when, on his benefit night in a provincial town he made one of those little before-the-curtain speeches for which he was famous, he said :—

“The local critics have suggested that my voice is hardly suited to the gentle art of love-making. With some compunction, and with my hand appropriately placed on my heart, I should like to inform those gentlemen that, following in private life that most agreeable of pursuits, I unfortunately find that *I get on as well as most people, and sometimes faster than is absolutely desirable.*”

Poor Sothorn ! He could always be humorous at his own expense, and never more so than when he was speaking the truth.

Among the notable list of Ada Ingots who supported him, I can vividly recall Mrs. Kendal (then Miss Madge Robertson) and Miss Ada Cavendish.

It is not generally known that Robertson, having infinite faith in the story that he had adapted and elaborated, wrote it not only in dramatic, but in narrative form. Hoping to earn a little money from it as a novelette, the poor fellow hawked this about among the booksellers and publishers while his neglected play was growing dusty on Lacy's heavily laden shelves ; but until the comedy was triumphantly produced he could



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SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AS "DAVID GARRICK"

Facing page 168

find no home for his wandering manuscript. Then, of course, it was quickly snapped up and published. I fear that in this shape it never made much of a mark, and in these days the interesting little volume is quite a rarity. A copy of it, with its graceful dedication to Sothorn, dated March, 1865, is before me now. It runs—

“MY DEAR SOTHERN,

“I dedicate this little book to you for reasons which will be obvious to those readers who do me the honour to peruse the Preface. Though the offering be small, it is made with as much kindly feeling as if the matter contained in this single volume were as weighty and well arranged as the contents of a large dictionary.

“Accept it, then, my dear Sothorn, with all its faults, though they are neither few nor far between; a circumstance which should not surprise you when you remember that it is the work of

“Your very sincere friend,

“THE AUTHOR.”

In the Preface, Robertson tells as follows the story of the origin of the play, as far as it concerned him :—

“Having seen the drama of *Sullivan* acted by a company of French comedians at the St. James's Theatre, I was struck by the compactness of the story, its contrast of character, and its dramatic effect. Its moral was good and wholesome, and the piece was entirely free from that objectionable element which, though acceptable to a French audience, is, happily, exactly the reverse with an English one. I adapted

Sullivan and christened it *David Garrick* for these reasons.

"Garrick was a great actor ; he had been dead a century, had no living descendants, and his name was public property. He was much admired ; his impressionability, versatility, and, above all, his wonderful impersonation of drunkenness, marked him out as the proper hero of the tale.

"The next step was to submit the drama to several managers of theatres, and to several actors. Each and all of these gentlemen declared that the piece—when produced—would be a failure. For about seven years the manuscript slumbered in a drawer, until in the course of a casual conversation I happened to mention the plot of the play to Mr. Sothern.¹ He was struck with it as I had been, in particular with the fact of Garrick, who was so estimable a man in the private relations of life, refusing to take advantage of the affections of an heiress, and advising her to return to her father. The admirable acting of Mr. Sothern, and of the members of the Haymarket Company, made the piece a success ; and its reception in town and country has falsified the predictions of the managers and actors to whom it had been previously submitted.

"Let me here say that, though the incidents of this little book are not in accordance with biographical and historical fact, they are not for that reason untrue. They might have happened. The real, actual Mr. David Garrick was not married until the year 1749.

¹ Robertson says nothing here concerning the fact that the poor play had been "pawned" to Lacy for ten pounds.

Whatever adventures may have occurred to him before that time are a legitimate theme for speculation, and the novelist may claim his privilege."

Robertson did not claim much, for he finishes his story, which was written long before the play was produced, very vaguely. It is true that it ends with Alderman Ingot's (he is called Trawley in the book) familiar lines—

"Mr. Garrick, will you do me the honour of accepting my daughter's hand?"—but the author, dismissing romance rather mercilessly, adds: "Poetical justice could not be awarded to the loves of Mr. David Garrick and Miss Ada Trawley, as detailed in these pages. They could not, with any regard to known and undisputed facts, have been united. It has therefore been thought better to let each reader finish the story as he or she pleases. The cynical and sceptical may think that Ada and David, when allowed to see each other daily, grew weary; that the gentleman found his inamorata a spoiled, forward girl, and the lady discovered her hero to be a mere vain player, who had no thought but for himself, and of the shrugs and struts that procured him applause at the theatre; that mutual disgust set in, and the lovers became unloving. The romantic may suppose the marriage broken off by the interposition of Lady Shendryn, and the lovers doomed to separation and unmitigated woe;¹ and the sentimental may imagine that Ada, warmed by the sun of Garrick's love,

¹ Lady Shendryn appeared in the novel, but not in the play. The name was evidently a favourite one with Robertson, for he used it in his pretty comedy, *Ours*.

rallied, but that the dart had stricken too deeply, and the actor had the unutterable anguish of soothing the death-pillow of his promised bride. It is permitted us all to fashion the clouds into the shapes most pleasing to our mental vision."

It must be remembered that at the time he wrote these lines poor Robertson, irritated almost beyond endurance by rebuffs from managers, actors, and publishers, was in a very cynical mood. Had he composed his undoubtedly clever story after, instead of before, Sothorn had made that great success in the long-neglected *David Garrick*, he might have written in a much happier mood. As it was, he said in his final melancholy chapter :—

"There is nothing," says the proverb, "so successful as 'success.' But, then, success is only successful—it is no more. A town taken, a victory of any sort won, a triumph of any kind achieved—the hero, victor, or gainer does not live happy ever after. He is still susceptible to catarrh, coughs, corns, east winds, rheumatism, the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, the pangs of despised love, and other of the million ills to which flesh is heir and executor. But of all the compensatory strokes of affliction that sting the successful none are so terrible as those that strike to the heart, centre, or bull's-eye, as it were, of their success. The man who has toiled all his life to amass a gallery of pictures, built his gallery, secured his masterpieces, and is stricken blind ; the keen sportsman, who has dragged through the drudgery of city life, that he might enjoy the country and the meet, and who, the means to the

end attained, is made prisoner to his chamber for the remainder of his life ; the duck who rears her shelled brood, and conducts them, cackling, to the pond to see them drown—feel a deeper pang than those who fardels bear, and are habituated to their inconvenience and burden.”

It is to be feared that there is much truth in this—truth which only those who strive hard to win worthily in life’s battle, who seem to onlookers to be successful, but who are conscious in their own sensitive souls that much—oh, so very much !—is lacking, will appreciate.

I believe that those who are envied (and in some cases hated) by others as being the most successful men of their day—whether it be in politics, literature, art, or any of the higher callings of life—often carry greater disappointments in their heart of hearts than the great crowd of nonentities who are content to sit as spectators and allow these “successes” to cater for their welfare and amusement. All they have to do is to criticise, and that is so delightfully easy.

Possibly the happiest man in the world is he who has no soul above some small business of which he has absolute control, and who is conscious of the fact that year by year his profits are increasing. He does not tell others of his prosperity—no ! no !—he might be expected to be too generous, but he puts his good fortune down to his own cleverness, and hugs himself in silent contentment. He lives in a very little world, but for him it is full of warmth and sunshine, for he feels he can afford to patronise his neighbours and lay down the law to his wife and children. In short, instead of being

a self-tormentor with heart and ambition set on some worthy goal he may never reach, he is supremely satisfied with himself, and is his own ideal.

Notwithstanding his own knowledge of life, and his desire to deal justly, not only with history, but with human nature, Robertson did well to let his stage version of *David Garrick* have a happy ending. In spite of pessimists who maintain that the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, should, in all its painful details, be told upon the stage, the large majority of English playgoers still like to leave the theatre feeling that at curtain-fall the hopes of the hero and heroine who have engrossed their evening have been realised. I know that the love scenes between David Garrick and Ada Ingot, and the idea that the loving, self-sacrificing pair are to be united, have gladdened thousands and thousands of hearts. In comparison to this what matters a little departure from historical accuracy, or a brief excursion into the realms of romance?

In Robertson's novel the names differ from those that are so familiar in the playbills, and I expect that for this Sothern, who was exceedingly fastidious in such matters, was responsible. Thus Alderman Trawley becomes Alderman Ingot, and Mr. Robert Raubreyne is transformed into Squire Chivy.

Sothern played David Garrick with unfailing success until the all too early end of his acting days. The last time I saw him in the part was at the Birmingham Theatre Royal not long before his health broke down, and then an incident occurred that would have been

droll had it not been infinitely sad. He was my guest at the time, and I, knowing him to be nervous, ill, unhappy, and very disinclined to act, was for some time fearful for him—but he played so well in the first and second acts that I was reassured. The drunken scene, with its alternating moments of wild humour and intense pathos, never went better, and he was rewarded with torrents of applause. But, in the last act, a strange thing occurred. He had got to the beautiful speech in which, addressing Ada, he says, “I know the world. I might deceive myself, but I will never deceive you. I must save you. I had a mother once, whom I loved devotedly.” He then, it will be remembered, goes on to tell her, in touching words, how his mother became broken-hearted because he insisted on being an actor, and how success came to him too late to prove to her that he was right in following the bent of his own inclination. In his most serious voice he began, “I had a mother once,” and then gazed with a troubled look at his large audience. I saw at once what had happened to him. Often as he had repeated them, he had entirely forgotten his lines. The voice of the prompter was heard, and I noticed that, with bent head, the unfortunate Ada was trying to refresh his memory, but all that he seemed able to do was to repeat the words, “I had a mother once,” and then, cutting the whole heart out of his exquisite little speech, to conclude with its final lines, “My mother was dead. Her tears weigh upon me yet.” Without, apparently, heeding what had taken place (and honestly, I believe they did not notice it), the audience rewarded him with a round

of applause, and he went on to the end of the piece with his usual success. Over his after-supper cigar that night Sothern said to me—

“Did you notice an alteration in Garrick?”

Anxious to spare his feelings, I answered that I thought the piece had never gone better.

“But surely,” he continued, “you saw an amendment in the last act?”

Thus cornered, I said, “Oh, you mean about Garrick’s story of his mother? Yes, I did notice that. But it did not matter—you know how the house applauded.”

“Yes,” said Sothern, apparently in his happiest mood. “It is the best cut ever made in a play. The audience don’t want to know anything about that old lady and her ailments. She isn’t in the piece, and nobody cares about her. All they want Garrick to say is what I said to-night, ‘I had a mother once. My mother was dead. Her tears weigh upon me yet.’ That’s common sense; that’s human nature. Every man has had a mother once; almost every man’s mother is dead; and certainly every decent-minded man would like his mother’s tears to weigh upon him yet. That’s all I’m going to say in the future.”

And with this Dundreary-like observation he sank into his chair and smoked contentedly.

Dear, sunny-minded Sothern; it was so like him to make the best of everything! The sorely perplexed Ada Ingot of that evening was pretty Miss Julia Stewart, the young actress who made such a notable success at the Haymarket Theatre as the winsome “guid”

Scotch lassie of W. S. Gilbert's whimsical comedy, *Engaged*.

This was in the spring of 1879, and they were poor Sothern's last appearances upon the boards on which he had done some of his earliest work, and had learned to love. Oddly enough, on the last night of the existence of the old playhouse, whose history dated back to 1774, Charles Wyndham gave a special performance of *David Garrick*, and made a most interesting valedictory speech. This was in January, 1902, and I shall refer to it in a later chapter.

When, in 1886, Charles Wyndham wisely regarded his friends' advice and revived *David Garrick* at the Criterion Theatre, he recognised the fact that within the twenty-two years that had elapsed since its first production criticism had progressed, and that though Sothern's acting and personality had conquered all difficulties, Robertson's play was not well constructed. Sothern, for example, had to make his exit after the famous drunken scene in the middle of an act, and if he was compelled, as he generally was, to respond to a call, he did it to the destruction of the scene and the despair of his fellow-actors. And so without at all detracting from, but rather adding to, the charm of the story, the actor-manager of the Criterion had the play deftly refashioned, and it was in a greatly improved piece of stagecraft that he faced his delighted first-night audience.

I believe that for these slight but well-advised alterations the services both of James Albery and Alfred C. Calmour, the well-known dramatist and author of

that charming dramatic idyll, *The Amber Heart*, in which Miss Ellen Terry was wont to fascinate her audiences, were called in.

David James was the Simon Ingot of the new cast and played it to perfection. It is a good part, and that master of old comedy, William Farren, who subsequently appeared in it, told me that it was a favourite one with him. George Giddens, who gave an admirable rendering of the character, was the Squire Chivy; William Blakeley the Smith; and Miss Mary Moore the Ada Ingot.

I do not think that in these pages I need dwell on an impersonation that has engraven itself on the hearts of almost a generation of playgoers, and is as popular to-day as it was eighteen years ago. Charles Wyndham's David Garrick will live in stage history, and it deserves to do so, for in it humour and pathos, high spirits and earnestness are blended with the skill of a consummate artist. Such acting as this, appealing as it does to all that is emotional and good in human nature, will surely, surely live as long as the world goes round.

How well he was, and ever has been, supported by Miss Mary Moore as Ada Ingot, he would be the first to acknowledge. Hers was, and always has been, the worthy companion picture of a great masterpiece. Although he has never said so to me, I sometimes fancy that his almost phenomenal triumph as Garrick (and it is a triumph that should ensure the lasting success of any actor) has sometimes, by very reason of its greatness, proved a little irksome to the ever-artistically aspiring Charles Wyndham. If, while a new play is

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being rehearsed, *David Garrick* is announced as a convenient stopgap, the business at the box-office becomes so brisk that the production of the novelty would be indefinitely postponed unless the actor-manager had the courage to break the run of a revival in the high tide of renewed financial success. Just as Sothern used to moan, "I don't want to be always Dundreary," so Charles Wyndham may sometimes murmur to himself (I don't know that he does), "Am I to be Garrick for ever?"

But Charles Wyndham has done things with Robertson's once despised, dust-covered play undreamt of by Sothern. The Prince of Wales (now our good King Edward VII.) was so pleased with the revival of a piece that had delighted him in Sothern's day that he "commanded" a performance of it at Sandringham. With every demonstration of approval this took place on January 7th, 1887, before H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, H.R.H. the Princess of Wales and their distinguished Yuletide house-party. I reproduce a copy of the programme connected with a most interesting performance.

In the same year Charles Wyndham translated the play into German, and in that language, and, with the exception of Miss Mary Moore, supported by a German company, successfully carried out the bold experiment of playing it in November, first at Liegnitz and then at Berlin. But like most experiments, it seemed likely at one time to prove a disappointment. Those trial performances at Liegnitz were given, as far as Garrick and Ada were concerned, with anxious hearts, and for the following reason.

The Berlin engagement was made in the summer, simply on the reputation of a great London success; but when the German manager read the translation in the autumn he took the strongest objection to its being played. The fact is, that as a manuscript, *David Garrick*, in its simplicity, does not read as a good play, and this being his first season in management, he was so alarmed at the possibilities of failure that he tried all sorts of inducements to persuade Charles Wyndham to abandon the engagement, and Charles Wyndham would have been very pleased to do so, relying on the manager's experience of German audiences, had the engagement not been widely circulated in the English newspapers. It was impossible for him, therefore, to withdraw. The manager, in his prudence, felt then that his best policy would be to tell everybody, critics included, that he feared he had made a mistake, and that the piece, which he had taken simply on its reputation, was not up to the level of German requirements. When Charles Wyndham suggested to him that it was very bad policy, seeing that he was bound to go on with it, he confessed that he had done so because that was his first season, and he wanted to preserve his reputation as a wise one in his selections. Manager and actor, however, were very friendly together, and at last the great night came. All the *élite* of Berlin were there, including the British Ambassador and all his staff. Mr. Wyndham's wife and their daughter had accompanied the bold actor and Miss Moore to Germany. They were among the first to be seated in the house, and as his daughter understood German, she was very much mortified to hear, in her



SANDRINGHAM.



FRIDAY EVENING, JANUARY 7TH, 1887,

At Ten o'clock (Sandringham Time),

DAVID GARRICK



David Garrick	Mr. CHARLES WYNDHAM
Simon Ingot	Mr. DAVID JAMES
Squire Chivey	Mr. GEORGE GIDDENS
Smith.....	Mr. WILLIAM BLAKELEY
Brown	Mr. A. BERNARD
Jones.....	Mr. J. R. SHERMAN
George (Garrick's Servant)	Mr. W. E. GREGORY
Groom	Mr. F. G. DARBISHIRE
Thomas.....	Mr. F. EMERY
Mrs. Smith	Miss FFOLLIOTT PAGET
Miss Araminta Brown	Miss EMILY MILLER
Ada Ingot	Miss MARY MOORE

The action takes place in Ingot's Drawing Room and
Garrick's Study.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

neighbourhood, somebody telling a friend that they had "come to see the English clowns." Such was the impression given by the manager's forewarnings. As *David Garrick* is rather a short play, the manager was producing a new one-act German piece, to which he had taken a great fancy, and to which he had given extraordinary preliminary praise in all the newspapers. He cast it with his leading lady and some of the best members of his company. To the surprise of everybody, and to the trepidation of the anxious Charles Wyndham, the curtain fell on it with a pronounced condemnation of hisses and abuse. As the leading lady came off he considerably asked her not to tell poor nervous Miss Moore of this scene. Such was her spirit of good comradeship that she ran up to Miss Moore's room and told her that the audience were in splendid form and humour, and most amiable, thus saving the *débutante* from any sense of alarm. *David Garrick* had not been playing more than eight minutes when its further progress was stopped by the audience recalling Miss Moore on to the stage after her first exit, and from that moment the piece went on triumphantly, Charles Wyndham and Miss Moore being the recipients of an extraordinary compliment at the end of the second act, when the Press sent round an unanimous expression of congratulation. At the end of the piece, Miss Moore, Charles Wyndham, and his family were being entertained at a supper at an hotel, about thirty people sitting down, when the manager, who was being feasted in the same building (probably in a spirit of anticipatory condolence), begged permission to join the Wyndham

circle for a little while, and before he sat down made an eloquent speech, apologising for his adverse criticisms, and acknowledging the great success in art which had been achieved. Rather an amusing incident at that same supper was Charles Wyndham pretending to forget what he had to say in his German speech, and calling upon Miss Moore to finish it for him, the point being that she was very diffident with regard to her knowledge of the German language, and would most probably be unequal to such an emergency. However, she got the best of the joke by responding in a remarkably neat and well-delivered little speech in excellent German. The fact was that early in the day it had occurred to her that she might possibly be mischievously tried in this way, and, determining to be equal to the occasion, had carefully prepared and studied a few tactful sentences.

The success of *David Garrick* at Liegnitz ought to have told that curiously constituted German manager that his fears for Berlin were absolutely groundless. Here are two translated criticisms of that interesting first performance.

The *Liegnitz Tagblatt* of November 11th said :—

“When a foreigner treads the boards of a German theatre, and speaks his part in the German language, it is a chance that, even in the event of success, we ourselves find that a not very interesting experiment is the outcome. With this idea we went last night to the theatre, but we came away again with the impression of a real art enjoyment, which we shall hold in our memory for a long time. Mr. Wyndham and Miss Moore, from

the Criterion Theatre, London, trod in Liegnitz for the first time a German stage.

“Mr. Wyndham is not alone a good actor, he is an eminent artist. Already in the first act his gait, gesture, tone showed that we had a good actor before us, who had his part thoroughly and clearly worked out, though sometimes, in the speeches between Garrick and Ingot, some effect was injured by the English accent of the star. But in the second act, in which Garrick almost exclusively dominates the stage, we were more deeply and strongly affected through the power of the representation. Garrick plays a drunkard because he has given his word of honour to cure the passion of the girl who loves him and whom he passionately adores. He plays the jolly drunkard, the money-grabbing gambler, the bully, to provoke the disgust of her at whose feet he would like to fling himself. The tumult of feeling which follows was played in a masterly style by Mr. Wyndham. In the midst of the wild bustle sounded the heart-breaking sigh from an anguished heart; over the convulsed face of the seeming drunkard stole the shadow of deep pain; and, with the restless, shifting eye, crept the expression of the soul-agony as the figure of the lover disappeared, and through the harsh tones of an excited voice were heard the thrilling sounds of indescribable misery. In such a performance we forget the accent of the foreigner; one would have understood him and been affected by his by-play even if he had not spoken at all. On the same high level stands the acting of Mr. Wyndham in the third act, and the public followed breathlessly what took place on the stage, and broke out afterwards into immense applause. Seldom



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SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AND MISS MARY MOORE IN "DAVID GARRICK"

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have we seen the Liegnitz audience, which is generally considered very cold, so enthusiastic. And they were right. Mr. Wyndham is a great artist. Miss Moore, who played the part of Ada Ingot, charms through her tender, pure appearance—through her sweet face with the large speaking eyes. She also is an actress of considerable talent for the sentimental part; she possesses very touching tones, but she has more difficulties to master in the German language than her companion, and cannot, therefore, show her art in the same manner. Excellent was her expulsion of Garrick in Act ii., and the expression of pain and doubt in the third act. She also received well-merited applause.”

The *Liegnitz Zeitung* of November 11th said :—

“The play is no *lustspiel*, as described in the bills. The piece is one of much art, and stage effect, and should be called a comedy. The characterisation of each part is strongly marked; the action of the scenes is quite in accordance with the rules of art, so that a success of the comedy, even with poorer players, would be assured.

“Mr. Wyndham, who, with the exception of a few harsh expressions, speaks the German language in a perfectly masterly manner, acted with rare accomplishment. In bearing, gait, and gesture, and, above all, in the tone of his voice, the representation of Garrick was all in unity, from the first word up to the last joyous cry. We saw the hot tears of a man—we heard the true agony of a heart martyred to death and captivated, excited and touched—we forgot that it was only a poetical picture presented to us. The artist took us by storm, as only a God-inspired genius can. The great drunken

scene, in its completeness and wonderfully thought-out detail, was a happy, exceptional work of art, which showed us, in an unaffected manner, the inmost heart of Garrick. Miss Moore, who has a lovely appearance, took at once the hearts of her hearers prisoners. The actress put into the part of Ada a wonderful charm ; she moved us as the loving daughter in intercourse with her father, and enchanted us when she joked and laughed ; but, above all, she was great in the last grand scene with Garrick, when she rose up in all her love. Especially good was the by-play of the artist, which, particularly in the drunken scene, was unsurpassable. Nothing was to be seen of the usual theatrical gestures ; it was all so natural, so artistically simple, that the moderated method of the accomplished actress astonished us. We left, last night, the theatre with the consciousness of having experienced an enjoyment that can almost be pronounced unprecedented, and we are sorry for those who have not witnessed the same with us. The stars earned almost exceptional applause and calls never known here before."

Equal praise was accorded them in Berlin, and, hearing of this great theatrical attraction, the Czar expressed his strong desire to see *David Garrick* at St. Petersburg. Accordingly Charles Wyndham and Miss Moore extended their travels to Russia, and appeared both at St. Petersburg and Moscow, and at the former city were on one occasion recalled before the curtain no less than twelve times after the second act.

Their acting afforded so much pleasure to the Czar that he presented Charles Wyndham with a handsome

ring, and Miss Moore with an exquisite brooch, both richly set with rubies and diamonds.

And thereby hangs a tale.

In the days when Sothern was in the best of high spirits, and plying to the top of its bent his extraordinary mania for practical joking, he subtly induced Charles Wyndham to enter into one of his elaborately prepared "sells," as he used to call them. Charles Wyndham, it should be noted, although he possessed a sense of humour equal to that of Sothern, was never prepared to go as far as he did to attain his ends, but was quite as successful in carrying out a harmless jest.

Indeed, he had, as a rule, little sympathy in such affairs, and when I told him I proposed to put the following story into my book, he wrote me :—

"MY DEAR PEMBERTON,

"There is, when one views the matter in cold blood, something apparently heartless in practical jokes, and I am not sure that this one will prove interesting from your readers' point of view. My memory awakens as I recall it, and I cannot help laughing at all Sothern's machinations, but I wonder a little whether others, not familiar with him and his methods, will see fun in it. *Your* stories about him are eminently funny, but they would lose, I think, a little by the substitution of printer's ink for your racy method of telling them.

"Yours very sincerely,

"CHARLES WYNDHAM."

As it happened I was able to prove to him that in my memoir of poor Sothern those practical joke stories had

proved remarkably popular with the public, and so he left the matter in my hands, realising that the victim of the joke—Edgar Bruce—had learnt to laugh at it long before his all too early death.

I think my readers will be amused with it, and even amazed at it, for in the oddest way it foreshadowed Charles Wyndham's then undreamt-of Russian engagement. It certainly was an elaborate joke, for it extended over six weeks ; but this was nothing to Sothern, who would have loved to extend it over six years if he could, and, if he had been able to find them, in six hemispheres.

What happened was this. In the spring of 1875 Charles Wyndham and Edgar Bruce were playing in the perennial *Brighton* at the Standard Theatre, in Shore-ditch—West End stars went there in those days—when, one night, in response to a cordial invitation, they supped with Sothern. At the bountifully spread table sat a fine, handsome man, with a big black beard and foreign appearance. Sothern rather incoherently introduced him to the later comers as Count —— purposely, and in accordance with his mischievous custom, so slurring over the name that his hearers could not grasp it. Thus it came about that the nearest approach to the name that came from Sothern's lips was, to Edgar Bruce's apprehension, "Count Shouvaloff," who was at that time Russian Ambassador in London. It was in the nature of things that Sothern and Wyndham should at once accept the situation, and immediately Sothern began to tell Wyndham and Bruce that the Count had been good enough to promise his influence with the

Czar to procure an engagement for Sothern to play *Dundreary* at St. Petersburg. The supposed Count, quite alive to the necessity of the situation, confined his observations to the monosyllables "Yes" and "No." So when Wyndham said, "What a great opportunity this is for Sothern!" the only reply he extorted was, "Yes"; and when Wyndham asked if there would be any difficulty in getting him an engagement to play *Brighton* in St. Petersburg, the answer was an emphatic "No."

"With your Excellency's permission," said Wyndham, "I will call at the Embassy to-morrow and arrange details."

"Yes, yes," was the encouraging reply.

"You will go, Bruce?" said Wyndham, turning to his colleague.

"Certainly, my boy," said Bruce, "I shall be delighted. I have always wanted to see Russia."

"Then that settles it," said Sothern; "we will all go together."

The distinguished Count, finding it difficult to sustain his character, or else fearing artistically that this was the right time to take his departure, rose and left the room, bowed out effusively by Sothern, Wyndham, and Bruce.

Now if the reader can realise the mental excitement of Bruce at the great prospect before him, and is at all familiar with the remarkable talent that Sothern possessed for practical joking, he can imagine what fun was evolved in the next hour by Sothern and Wyndham with Bruce, discussing the details of the trip. It ended at

last in an arrangement that Bruce was to give up acting entirely, and become manager to Sothern and Wyndham, with a view to his permanently settling down in St. Petersburg as manager of all foreign attractions.

A programme extending over two or three years was there and then drawn up, embracing visits to Russia of every known actor in London, under Bruce's auspices, this gentleman charging himself with drawing out the whole details and submitting them within a week to Sothern and Wyndham. With anybody else but a genius like Sothern, this little passing joke would have ended here, but not so with him; he was in his element. Nothing in life afforded him so much pleasure as was offered him at this point; therefore it was not surprising that on the following evening, when *Brighton* was proceeding at the Standard Theatre, a hansom cab drove up and a large official letter with a coat-of-arms was handed to Wyndham, the contents as follows:—

“CHARLES WYNDHAM, ESQ.

“SIR,

“His Excellency desires your acceptance of the accompanying ring as a souvenir of a very pleasant evening he spent in your society. He would like much to know what you think would be acceptable to Mr. Bruce.

“Yours, ——”

And here followed a good three-syllabled, unmistakable Russian name.

Wyndham, apt pupil of his master, contented himself with ejaculating the greatest surprise in the presence of

Bruce (who was dressing in the same room with him), and hastily put the letter in his pocket. The incident and the bearing of Wyndham caused a momentary curiosity in Bruce's mind, but it was evident to him that Wyndham wanted to keep his own counsel, so no further questions were asked. Half an hour later, however, Wyndham asked Bruce casually what his idea of an acceptable present would be. Bruce replied, "I don't know ; I think a nice ring or a nice tie-pin ; but why ?"

"Oh, nothing," answered Wyndham.

"What do you mean ?" asked Bruce again.

"Nothing," said Wyndham ; "let us talk of something else." And there the matter ended.

A night or two later these two were supping again with Sothern and a few of his friends, with a view, after everybody had gone, of discussing the Russian business. This time Bruce's mind was so impregnated with the idea that he could think of nothing else. It was natural that previous to sitting down to table, the three, with the great secret between them, should drift apart from the rest of the company.

"Did you get your ring ?" asked Sothern of Wyndham in an audible confidential tone.

"Yes," said Wyndham, with comic indignation. "What an absurd idea to send me such a magnificent thing as that ! I cannot wear it."

"Yes, it was magnificent," said Sothern. "I saw it before it was sent down to the theatre to you. I knew he was going to do it, because he was so charmed with you and Bruce."

"What's that ?" said Bruce, "what's that ?"

"What? Didn't you see Wyndham's ring?" inquired Sothern.

"Ring? What ring? I have heard nothing about a ring."

"Oh," said Sothern, "His Excellency sent Wyndham a magnificent diamond and ruby ring worth two hundred and fifty guineas."

"Why didn't you show it to me?" said Bruce to Wyndham.

"Because I was ashamed of it," said Wyndham; "the idea of my parading a two hundred and fifty guinea ring on my finger!"

"You are a remarkable man," said Bruce; "I only wish I had the chance."

"Didn't you tell His Excellency what Bruce would like?" asked Sothern of Wyndham.

"No," said Wyndham; "I merely thanked His Excellency in a letter, and said, 'With regard to Bruce, I decline to interfere in the matter.'"

"What do you mean by that?" said Bruce at once.

"Oh, nothing," said Wyndham; "I thought it would be bad taste on my part to say what you would like."

Sothern had at this point assumed a serio-comic expression, with which he regarded Wyndham, as much as to say, "I am disappointed in this man"—then turning to Bruce: "Never mind, old fellow, I will see about it. You shan't be forgotten."

Then everybody sat down to supper, Wyndham sitting on Sothern's right. Half-way through supper Sothern whispered to Wyndham, "Have a quarrel." Instantly Wyndham hammered his fist upon the table and declared

he would stand it no longer ; got up, and walked to the door. There was general consternation, and at the door Wyndham turned to Bruce and said, "Are you coming with me, or are you going to stay in this place?"

"What's the matter, old man?" said Bruce.

"No matter what's the matter; you will have to choose between here and Sothern, Russia and me."

Wyndham then walked out of the room, Bruce following, begging to know what was the matter. "Sufficient," said Wyndham, "that I tell you I never wish to speak to Sothern again as long as I live."

"Nonsense, nonsense," said Bruce, "you must not at such a critical time break up all our prospects. Come back and make it up."

"No, no," said Wyndham, "I leave at once; I shake the dust off from this infernal house for ever."

"Wait a moment for me, then," said Bruce, and rushed up to Sothern, who was still with his guests at the table.

"Come down, come down, my dear fellow," he said, and make it up with Wyndham. I don't know what it's all about, but you two fellows must not quarrel."

Solemnly and with great feeling Sothern declared—

"It's impossible; I never wish to see Wyndham again."

Down rushed Bruce to the hall door to again try and persuade Wyndham to return, but in vain; up again to Sothern with a like object and an equally fruitless result, and finding all reconciliation impossible, he came away with Wyndham, but not before he had elicited from Sothern the cause of the quarrel.

"Charley," said Bruce, "Charley, you are in the wrong! It is through Sothern that we are going to Russia, and you are ungracious enough to accuse him, at the supper-table, of being jealous."

"Well," said Wyndham, "he accused me of having crept into the scheme uninvited, and I could not permit such an insult."

"But, my dear fellow, the idea of breaking off a big affair like this for so little!"

He walked home with Wyndham, entreating him to make it up till three o'clock in the morning, when Wyndham apparently gave way and told Bruce to draft a copy of the kind of letter he would like written to Sothern. The letter when finished and approved was to this effect:—

"DEAR SOTHERN,

"I am very sorry we have had any unpleasantness to-night; the fact of the matter was I came to your supper in an irritable state of mind; I had acted *Brighton* at the Crystal Palace during the day and at night at the theatre, and I suppose I was tired. Of course, I am very much obliged to you for your assistance over this Russian business, and I hope now that bygones will be bygones.

"Yours sincerely, "CHARLES WYNDHAM.

"P.S.—Don't forget about Bruce's ring.—C. W."

Next night came down a hansom cab to the Standard Theatre from the Haymarket, with a letter to Wyndham.

"SIR,

"I accept your apology, and I never wish to see your infernal face again.

"SOTHERN."

Wyndham pitched the note over to Bruce, indignantly saying, "There now, you see what you have done for me. You have made me humiliate myself only to get another insult! Now, is it possible for me to go to Russia with such a man as that?"

"I cannot make it out," said Bruce. "I was with Sothern at twelve o'clock to-day, and he told me it would be all right. Never mind; we shall meet him to-night at Wallis McKay's reception, and there I will settle the matter."

"No," said Wyndham, "I cannot go there to be insulted by Sothern."

"My dear fellow," said Bruce, "you *must*. We must not let such a grand thing as this Russian business come to grief through a little quarrel."

"Well," said Wyndham, "I will tell you what we will do; you shall go first and take a letter from me. If he wishes that we still be friends, let me know, and I will come in a quarter of an hour afterwards; if otherwise, you must give me a signal and I will go away, because it would never do for him and me to be seen in the same room and not talking to each other."

This was the letter that Wyndham handed to Bruce for perusal:—

"DEAR SOTHERN,

"I am very sorry for my share in the quarrel last night, and I know you well enough to believe that by this time you are equally sorry. It is quite true that I did accuse you of being jealous of my going to St. Petersburg also; but you must not forget that you

accused me of having crept into the affair. Now, had you said that I had sneaked into it, or wriggled into it, I should not have minded ; but when you said I crept into it I felt hurt. Let bygones be bygones.

“ Yours truly,

“ WYNDHAM.”

“ The wording is very peculiar,” said Bruce, “ but it will do.” And he took it to Sothern.

Now, at the first blush, one would imagine only anyone very simple would be the bearer of such a letter ; but anybody who knew Bruce’s excitable nature, and can imagine how absorbed he had become in this grand Russian scheme, would understand how, in consideration of such grand results, these little absurdities in the excitement of the moment would escape his attention.

Wyndham arrived at Wallis McKay’s reception. Sothern had graciously notified Bruce that he would receive Wyndham, and so these three worthies were again brought together. To many who were there and are still alive this will be an elucidation of Wyndham’s erratic conduct on that memorable occasion.

After a consultation together, Sothern impressed upon his two friends the necessity of absolute silence about the Russian business until the Czar’s signature had been obtained.

For the present, he explained, Shouvaloff was using all his influence so that the invitation should come, as it were, as a special favour from the Czar to him—“ for if it should be discovered,” he was reported to have said,

“that the whole thing had been planned over here for our benefit, the Czar might be angry and tear up the order for us to act ; therefore let me impress upon you both to keep your lips resolutely closed for the next two or three weeks.” Both pledged themselves to impenetrable silence, and immediately Wyndham walked away and began buttonholing everybody he came across, bewildering and astonishing them by questions as to their opinion of the condition of the Russian stage, the climate of Russia, whether the Czar liked theatricals, and every conceivable question in connection with the object in view.

Can the reader imagine the distress portrayed by that consummate actor Sothern, as time after time he begged Bruce to stop Wyndham talking about Russia? No sooner would Wyndham buttonhole any guest than Bruce would be at his side, pulling his sleeve and begging him in the name of Heaven to be silent.

“Why should I be silent?” Wyndham would reply. “This gentleman does not understand that I have any particular object in asking this question. Do you, now?” he would ask, turning to the guest. “The fact of the matter is, we have a great plan in view, Sothern, Bruce, and I. I cannot tell you anything about it, for Sothern says it is necessary for us to keep it quiet. But can you understand from anything I have said—and I want you to reassure Bruce on the point—that the great plan we three are arranging is in any way connected with Russia?”

“No, indeed,” the guest would say, and wonder what on earth was the matter with Wyndham, whether there

was a passing touch of insanity, or whether Wallis McKay's champagne had been too liberally handed round.

"Don't worry me another time," Wyndham would say to Bruce in a loud voice; "tell Sothern to mind his own business, I can keep a secret as well as he can."

And again he would turn away and begin talking to somebody about Russia.

"It is no use," said Bruce finally to Sothern. "Wyndham has completely lost his head and I cannot hold him back!"

Sothern, of course, was in despair. "Dear, dear!" he would say. "Cannot you persuade him to go home? He is talking to everybody about Russia, and presently everybody will talk, and we shall lose our chance."

No, Wyndham would not go, and he assured everybody in a loud voice that no one would know that Russia was uppermost in his mind.

"Well," said Sothern in another serious confidence with Bruce, "it is a thousand pities that Wyndham is in it with us at all. I cannot think why I ever permitted him to come into it, for to tell you the truth, I don't like Wyndham."

"Oh, he is all right," said Bruce.

"No, he is not," replied Sothern, "and I think it best to warn you he is no friend of yours."

"Oh, nonsense," said Bruce, "I have known him a great number of years."

"All the same, he is no friend of yours, and not a sincere man."

"What do you mean?" inquired Bruce.

"Well, look here," said Sothern, "I don't want to make any mischief, but I like you and I don't like Wyndham; therefore I will tell you all, but don't mention it again, even to Wyndham. Ever since the arrangement was made with His Excellency, Wyndham has been striving might and main to get you out of the business."

"Are you quite sure of that?" said Bruce.

"Quite," said Sothern, "and I will tell you what—he wants to introduce a cousin of his as manager of the affair; and if I can help it I am quite determined not to have any of his family mixed up in it."

All this, it is needless to say, was conveyed to Wyndham by Sothern a few minutes later.

For a day or two Bruce treated Wyndham with a most profound reserve; but at last he could bear it no longer, and, taking advantage of a long "wait," when they were both resting in their dressing-room, he put his chair opposite to his companion's and placing his hands on his knees, said, "Wyndham, I cannot keep it any longer! Sothern said I was not to mention a word about it, but I must really know. Sothern says you are trying to work me out of this Russian business, and get a cousin of your own in as manager. Is it true?"

"What!" shouted Wyndham, jumping up in indignation, "did Sothern tell you that? The double-dyed traitor! The villainous humbug! Now I will tell you the truth, Bruce. It is Sothern who is trying to work you out of it against my will. He wants to get Blackmore, the agent, into it, and I have put my foot

down most heavily against Blackmore. You go to him to-morrow with this letter which I shall now write, and make him read it before you, and let him dare say there is a word of untruth in it ! ”

This is the letter that Bruce took to Sothern on the following morning :—

“ DEAR SOTHERN,

“ I am surprised at your saying I wanted to work Bruce out of the Russian business and get in my cousin. All I said to you was, that as Bruce was no linguist, and as my cousin was, it would be better for my cousin to be associated with Bruce in the affair ; to travel with him, to eat with him, and to sleep with him, so that Bruce should never be at a loss.

“ Yours,

“ CHARLES WYNDHAM.”

“ Well,” said Sothern the next morning, when he read the letter, “ there is some truth in what Wyndham says ; but all the same, I don’t trust Wyndham, and I advise you to be on your guard against him, for I swear he is no friend of yours.”

All the time this was going on the “ ring ” fiction was being actively worked. Sothern had enlisted the assistance of his friend Captain Atkinson, and a letter was written to Bruce saying that the Secretary to the Russian Ambassador would call down at the theatre to consult with him as to what would be most acceptable to him in the form of a present, His Excellency being most anxious to signalise the pleasure of the introduction to him by consulting his taste as to the form of the souvenir.

Captain Atkinson used to call at the stage door, timing his arrival so that the message to the effect that "The Secretary to the Russian Ambassador desired to see Mr. Edgar Bruce" was delivered just as that gentleman was going to rush upon the stage for a long scene. How vivaciously and rapidly Bruce used to act that scene, and how Wyndham would purposely flag in his part of it, introducing gags to prolong it and exciting the impatience of his fellow-actor, can be easily imagined; also the disgust with which Bruce would rush at the termination of the scene to the stage door to find that the Secretary had left word with the hall-keeper that he was so sorry he had an important engagement, and could not wait any longer, but would call again in a few days.

The industry of Sothern was marvellous. He next went to Streeter, the jeweller, took that gentleman into his confidence, and secured a most gorgeous bracelet on loan. He pressed into service a lady to wear it at a supper which he gave to one or two friends, naturally with Wyndham and Bruce present. Sothern confided to Bruce that the bracelet was given by His Excellency as a souvenir of the pleasure he had experienced on being introduced to its wearer, which naturally served to whet the devouring impatience of Bruce for another call at the stage door by the Secretary to the Russian Ambassador.

So engrossed had Bruce become in the whole affair that some few weeks elapsed before it occurred to him that he had never seen Wyndham's ring.

"You shall see it at once, my dear boy," said Wynd-

ham ; "you shall see how ridiculous it was to give me a present so magnificent that I cannot wear it. Come home with me to-night and I will show it to you. No, not to-night ; I am going out ; come home with me to-morrow night."

To-morrow night Bruce was going out, but the third night was fixed upon, to be again postponed. And so a week dragged its length along, until Wyndham went to Bruce, and in indignant tones commented upon the humbugging disposition of Sothern.

"What do you mean ?" said Bruce.

"Why, you remember he told me that that ring of mine was worth two hundred and fifty guineas ; well, seeing how impossible it was for me ever to wear it, I determined this morning to sell it, and all I got for it was ninety guineas !"

"Good heavens !" exclaimed Bruce, "what a dissatisfied man you are ! You are complaining of a present which has only realised ninety guineas ! Why, even then it must be a magnificent affair, and, hang it ! I haven't had mine yet at all !"

By this time every pore of the unsuspecting Bruce's body had sucked in Russia, and at the Savage Club everybody was asking what was the matter with him. He would come and stand day after day, leaning against the mantelpiece absorbed in thought, revolving all sorts of plans and enterprises which had grown from the nucleus of Sothern and Wyndham's visit to St. Petersburg.

If a "Savage" asked what he seemed so anxious about he was told not to interrupt him, as he was

concerned in a great thing which needed much thought, and which would astonish London when it became known.

Things had gone by this time as far as it was safe to go, and now that light-hearted and excellent comedian, Charles Collette, appeared upon the scene, and was taken into the confidence of the conspirators ; and two days afterwards, from a little paragraph which he managed to insert in the *Brighton Gazette*, the news flew all over England and Scotland that Sothern and Wyndham were about to sign an engagement to play their respective parts of Lord Dundreary in *Our American Cousin*, and Bob Sackett in *Brighton* in St. Petersburg, and that Mr. Edgar Bruce was about to start in three weeks' time as manager, to make the necessary arrangements.

This was apparently a great blow to Sothern and Wyndham. They turned to Bruce furiously and accused him of divulging the secret prematurely, and so destroying all chances of the Russian engagement.

It took the "Savages" nearly a week to convince Bruce that he had been the victim of a prolonged practical joke ; and it is due to him to say that, when he had once realised the true position of affairs, he took the jest as good-naturedly as could be.

But years afterwards sheer fancy was turned into solid fact, and even the diamond and ruby ring was not left out of the strange realisation of Sothern's elaborately planned "sell."

It will, however, be easily understood that when Charles Wyndham received an intimation that Imperial gifts awaited Miss Moore and himself at the Russian

Embassy in London, he, remembering the part he had taken in the Edgar Bruce affair, shook his head and thought that now was his time to avoid being made the victim of a practical joke. The story had gone the rounds of the theatrical circle. J. L. Toole in those days dearly loved a jest, and it was thought that he was responsible for the recurring letters from the Embassy.

To the point of rudeness the suspicious Charles Wyndham declined to reply, and when at last he was compelled to do so, and to his amazement found that the Czar's presents were really awaiting him, no one was more amused at his explanation than the Russian Ambassador.

Although it may be anticipating events, I must proceed with my *David Garrick* chapter. In America, where Sothorn had already appeared in it, the play scored a second great success ; in the English provinces it always drew packed audiences ; and as often as it was revived in London it received an equally warm welcome.

Speaking at the conclusion of one of these productions at the theatre that bears his name, Charles Wyndham, in response to loud calls from an audience that never seemed tired of applauding, said :—

“In obedience to your command, I appear before you, though I fear I am doing so under a misapprehension. I am very much in the position of a candidate for a degree who, when requested by the examiners to define a crab, said that a ‘crab was a red fish that walked backwards,’ whereupon the examiners informed him ‘the



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SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM IN THE CHARACTER OF "DAVID GARRICK"
FROM THE PICTURE BY MR. J. PETTIE, R.A.

Facing page 204

crab was not a fish, it was not red, and it did not walk backwards, but, with these exceptions, his definition was accurate.' Nothing would excuse my responding to your wishes to-night but for your belief that *David Garrick* was being withdrawn, and that I, according to report, was going away. The piece will not be withdrawn, inasmuch as we appear in it again next Thursday afternoon, and I am not going away. With these exceptions, my addressing you may be justifiable. Anyway, I am glad to take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks for the manner in which you countenanced for three months a revival—the eleventh revival in fourteen years—which I put on in November for twelve nights only. It speaks volumes for a play which has neither a problem nor a shock in it, but only deals with the simple, prosaic virtues of love and duty. Whether it is thanks or congratulations that are due to you for this I must not stop to ask, but content myself with begging you to receive both from a very grateful heart."

That Royalty did not tire of the play is amply proved by the fact that in the November of 1903 a "command" performance of it was given at Windsor Castle. The occasion was a most interesting one, and concerning it "one who knew" said: "Among the brilliant spectacles organised in honour of the visit of the King and Queen of Italy to this country, the state performance of *David Garrick*, given at King Edward's command by Sir Charles Wyndham in the Waterloo Chamber at Windsor Castle, will assuredly hold a high place in the memories of all privileged to be present. For weeks the event had been the subject of much careful study and attention

on the part of not only Sir Charles Wyndham himself, but also of the principal members of the staff of the New Theatre. The deep interest taken by the King in the preparations has also been evinced by his personal attendance at more than one scenic rehearsal. To Sir Charles, by the way, the experience is by no means a new one ; so far back as 1887 he had the honour of appearing at Sandringham in *David Garrick*, at a birthday celebration arranged by the King, then, of course, Prince of Wales. It is interesting to note that this constituted the first representation of an important play given in such circumstances since the death of the Prince Consort. Again, in 1896, Sir Charles was commanded to appear at Osborne, before Queen Victoria, in *The Squire of Dames*, but unhappily the arrangements came to a sad and untimely close, four days prior to the date fixed, by reason of the death of Prince Henry of Battenberg.

“And now, for the third time, Sir Charles is again ‘commanded’ to play before Royalty, thus establishing a record. The brilliant circumstances under which he did so to-night served further to confer upon the function an importance of a quite exceptional and remarkable description.

“It is characteristic of Sir Charles’s desire to satisfy himself personally that all arrangements had been duly attended to, that at two o’clock this afternoon he arrived at the Castle. Thither he had already been preceded by his trusty lieutenant, Mr. Percy Hutchison, accompanied by a little band of carpenters and scene-shifters. The two following hours were given over to the necessary

task of drilling the subordinates thoroughly in their respective tasks, and assigning to each his particular share in the evening's labours. On occasions of this kind the Waterloo Chamber is swiftly converted into the most charming and comfortable little theatre imaginable. The stage itself is of sufficient dimensions to accommodate any modern comedy, boasting, as it does, a breadth of fifty feet and a depth of twenty-five feet. The proscenium opening is twenty-one feet across and nineteen feet in height. The only real obstacle to the handling of heavy scenery lies in the fact that there is of course no dock, but in the case of a piece like *David Garrick*, in which only one change takes place, this is a matter of little consequence. A heavy rich curtain of vivid red cloth separates the stage from the auditorium, while between the spectators and the performers stretches a wide space, in which the members of the orchestra are accommodated. Just behind these runs a slight barrier, topped with a parterre of flowers, the brilliant colouring of which serves materially to heighten the general effect.

"The dazzling beauty of to-night's picture seems almost to baffle description. As happened just a year ago, on the occasion of the visit of the King and Queen of Portugal, the body of the auditorium had been raised to the level of the stage, the entire platform being draped in red. From massive electroliers above, and from hundreds of electric globes arranged round the walls, flashed a thousand glittering rays upon the distinguished company seated below. To the floral decorations some reference, however slight and inadequate, must also be made. Flanking the stage on both sides might be

discerned two nooks, exquisite in the exuberance and the beauty of the foliage heaped up within them. A couple of splendid palms towered to the full height of the proscenium, while beneath lay a perfect garden of chrysanthemums, arum lilies, ferns, and marguerites, making the air of the chamber sweet with their all-pervading perfume. As a matter of fact, wherever flowers could be disposed about the place the opportunity had been taken the fullest advantage of, and as the eye ranged over the scene it carried to the senses a curious and inexpressible feeling of sheer delight.

"It may not be amiss to recall here that the first occasion in recent times of the Waterloo Chamber being turned to account as a theatre occurred in 1891, when one of Mr. D'Oyley Carte's companies appeared there in the Gilbert-Sullivan opera, *The Gondoliers*. Sir Henry Irving also gave on its stage a performance of Tennyson's *Becket*, and Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Hicks (Miss Ellaline Terriss) last year occupied the boards with a representation of Mr. J. M. Barrie's *Quality Street*. But it may be questioned whether, in point of brilliancy or of interest, to-night's ceremony has ever been surpassed. *David Garrick* is a play which has long since established itself as one of the most highly prized of stage favourites, while Sir Charles Wyndham's impersonation of Little Davy has for years past been recognised as among the best and most completely satisfying of his many delightful achievements.

"A minor incident, by-the-by, threatened to mar the enjoyment of a certain number of those invited to-night. Late in the afternoon it was suddenly brought

to Sir Charles's knowledge that although King Victor Emmanuel and Queen Helena were thoroughly conversant with English, there were many belonging to their suite to whom our language was practically unknown. In their case, manifestly, the performance might as well be given in dumb-show for all they would be likely to understand of it. What was to be done in the emergency? Luckily Sir Charles's ready wit saved the situation. Calling for the assistance of a shorthand writer, he proceeded to dictate a brief but clear synopsis of the story of the play, which, after transcription, was duly translated into Italian, to be distributed later among those members of the audience to whom it might prove useful. Meanwhile all needful arrangements were being made to provide Sir Charles, Miss Mary Moore, and the remaining members of the company, who had delayed their arrival at the Castle until eight o'clock, with dressing-rooms in the grand vestibule and entrance. How thoroughly, indeed, the comfort of everyone concerned was cared for by the authorities those who took part in the performance are in the best possible position to testify.

"Waterloo Chamber, as the hands of the clock pointed to ten, presented a singularly striking and dazzling appearance, the greater part of the distinguished company being already seated. Had one desired to furnish forth a picture representative of 'fair women and brave men,' no more appropriate occasion could well have been seized upon. Five minutes later the near approach of the royal party was made manifest, and all those present rising to their feet, the King, with

the Queen of Italy on his arm, was seen to enter from the grand reception hall and to advance to his place in the front row, the strains of the Italian National Anthem meanwhile floating up from the orchestra. Closely following their Majesties came King Victor Emmanuel, escorting Queen Alexandra, and then, after the briefest interval, the crimson curtains parted, revealing on the stage Miss Mary Moore as Ada Ingot, and Mr. Alfred Bishop as her opulent but commonplace father. To speak of the performance of a piece so familiar in every detail would obviously be an act of superfluity ; enough that the artists, from Sir Charles Wyndham down to the humblest member of his company, addressed themselves to their tasks with an ardour and a vigour worthy of all praise."

A copy of the programme, which was beautifully printed on white satin, is shown on the opposite page.

It is worthy of note that the experienced actors who took the very subordinate and thankless parts of the servants did so at their own earnest request.

Of what occurred behind the scenes, and her own experience on that memorable night, Miss Mary Moore gave me a very interesting account, which I must here recall.

The actors had been told that the performance would begin at ten minutes to ten, and that the Italian National Anthem would be played just three minutes before the curtain rose, discovering Miss Moore and Mr. Alfred Bishop, who were both exceedingly nervous.

But when the National Anthem came to a conclusion, and the curtain remained down, they began in their



WINDSOR CASTLE.

THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 19th, 1903,

At Ten o'clock.

DAVID GARRICK

By T. W. ROBERTSON.

David Garrick.....	SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM
Simon Ingot	Mr. ALFRED BISHOP
Squire Chivey	Mr. SYDNEY BROUGH
Smith	Mr. HARRY PAULTON
Jones	Mr. PERCY HUTCHISON
Brown	Mr. REGINALD WALTER
George (Garrick's Servant)	Mr. FRANK ATHERLEY
Thomas } (Ingot's Servants) {	Mr. EILLE NORWOOD
William } {	Mr. LESLIE FABER
Groom.....	Mr. H. DUBERLEY
Mrs. Smith.....	Miss EMILY VINING
Miss Araminta Brown	Miss ETHEL MARRYATT
Ada Ingot	Miss MARY MOORE

The action takes place in Ingot's Drawing Room and Garrick's Study.

God Save the King.

anxiety to fear something was amiss. Several minutes passed, which seemed like ages to them, before the veil was drawn and they were disclosed to the view of the audience. This delay, they were afterwards told, was due to the fact that the guests could not resume their places until all the royalties were seated.

But when the play did begin it went from beginning to end without an instant's hitch. "Sir Charles," said Miss Moore, "appeared to me to give a very fine performance"; and then she added, with characteristic modesty, "I cannot be so sure about myself, especially in the first act, for, as you know, it is always such nervous work beginning the piece." I know she had no cause for misgivings. For the rest all went well. Sydney Brough did full justice to the honoured name he bears, and made a most acceptable Squire Chivy, being neither too loud nor too subdued in a character that requires delicate handling. It will be remembered that his esteemed father, Lionel Brough, was one of the first of the long line of Squire Chivys. Alfred Bishop, of course, gave an admirable account of himself as Simon Ingot, and Harry Paulton brought his quaint comedy method to bear on a part hardly worthy of him. But the fact is, all concerned in that production were determined to make Charles Wyndham's first appearance at Windsor a pronounced success. That they materially helped to do so he would be the first to own.

The scene from the stage struck Miss Moore as at once one of the most gorgeous and most beautiful (the word "gorgeous" does not always signify beauty) she

had ever seen, and yet it was surpassed by the splendour of the grand reception chamber to which, after the supper that had been served to the players in the Guard Chamber, she and Sir Charles were summoned. In this beautiful room were all the guests assembled at one end, and the two Kings and Queens, and all the other royalties, at the other.

“Our own King and Queen,” said Miss Moore, “came forward most graciously to meet us, and expressed themselves more than pleased with the performance ; in fact, they, and all the other royalties, who also kindly addressed us, conveyed to us the impression that the whole thing had been a success, and that they had really enjoyed themselves. The signal for our dismissal from this brilliant scene came when the Italian sovereigns retired for the night ; and we then returned to our companions, who were still seated at the supper-table.”

In a short time he and Miss Mary Moore received handsome presents from their Majesties the King and Queen as souvenirs of this memorable performance of *David Garrick*. His was a gold box, with *lapis lazuli* lid, and “E. R.” in diamonds, on each side of His Majesty’s portrait, which is itself surrounded with pearls. Miss Moore’s was a brooch in the shape of a diamond and enamel crown, crossed with pearl sceptres, and a diamond and enamel rose beneath, with pendant diamond star drop.

And now, for the moment, I take leave of David Garrick, though very likely he will crop up again in the course of these pages. As I write these lines, in the

June days of 1904, the piece is going as well as ever, at the New Theatre, and Charles Wyndham and Miss Mary Moore are winning as much applause in their respective characters as they did when they first appeared in them at the Criterion Theatre eighteen years ago.

CHAPTER VIII

LATER DAYS AT THE CRITERION

AS a faithful stage historian I must record the fact that, on July 19th, 1887, Charles Wyndham, ever zealous in the cause of charity, appeared in a matinée given at the Opera Comique, in aid of the "Buttercup and Daisies Fund," established by Miss Edith Woodworth to give poor children a summer holiday in the country. On that occasion the principal item on the programme was *The Ladies' Battle*, and in it he played the part of Gustave de Grignon. The character of the distracted man who posed to his mistress as a hero, and really wanted to do deeds of valour, but who at heart was as timid as a mouse, suited him well, and I have often wondered why he never added the pretty comedy to his repertory. In an interesting cast Miss Edith Woodworth was the Countess d'Autreval, Miss Kate Rorke the Léonie, Laurence Cautley the Henri de Flavigneul, and E. S. Willard the Baron de Mont-richard.

During occasional enforced absences from the Criterion boards Charles Wyndham revived some of the best comedies of the day, and always with the best of possible casts.

Indeed, his managerial motto has ever been, "The best of procurable plays, the cream of available acting." And so, under his control, throughout the ups and downs of other playhouses, the well-piloted little Criterion held its own. Certainly that little heart-of-London ship's cabin of which I have spoken had not been constructed for nothing! Its skipper knew his work. In later years a critic, writing of this indefatigable actor-manager's methods, said :—

"Every part becomes to him as important as if he were appearing for the first time ; he reads it, studies it, lives with it, until it becomes part of him. Every tone of his voice has been thought out, every gesture has been repeated—often before a large mirror—until when the first night comes there is not a point which he has not thought out. Taking such infinite pains on his own account, he naturally infects all who act with him or are under his management. Hence it comes about that he carries on to perfection's point that natural school of acting so successfully founded by the Bancrofts at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre."

On his return to his Piccadilly home, in February, 1888, and his reappearance in *David Garrick* (like King Charles's head in Mr. Dick's memorial, *David Garrick* will crop up again!), it was said : "The reception accorded to Mr. Charles Wyndham and Miss Mary Moore at the Criterion must have satisfied them that, during their absence, they had lost none of their hold on the public ; their welcome was an enthusiastic one, and the applause tremendous. Mr. Wyndham displayed increased resources and emotional power as David



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MISS MARY MOORE

Facing page 216

Garrick, and Miss Mary Moore was as sympathetic and graceful as hitherto as Ada Ingot. Evidences of their travels and of the cordial reception they had met with were to be seen in all parts of the house. A gold and silver vase, a silver, laurel-leaved wreath, Russian and German playbills, votive offerings innumerable, with gold-lettered ribbons attached, showing from whence they came, were to be seen in the corridors and vestibules, but, despite these valued proofs of foreign appreciation, the wanderers, at the close of the evening, surely realised that, after all their triumphs, there was no place like 'home.'"

Having now thoroughly determined to devote a portion, at least, of his time to serious parts, Charles Wyndham, in the January of 1889, revived Tom Taylor's perennial *Still Waters Run Deep*. In the character of John Mildmay he gave a perfect idea of a shrewd man, with a cool head and a warm heart, content to bide his time till the proper moment arrived to assert himself, and then proving equal to the occasion, and evincing a deep and abiding affection for the woman to whom he has given his love. Miss Mary Moore, looking very lovely, fitly conveyed the impression of a weak, loving nature that could be easily imposed upon by the admiration of a romantic-looking, plausible admirer. Mrs. Bernard Beere as Mrs. Sternhold, Herbert Standing as Captain Hawkesley, George Giddens as Dunbilk, and quaint old Blakeley, in the almost historic part of the fussy old Potter (played by many notable comedians, but never so well, perhaps, as by John Hare), completed an admirable cast.

In the July of 1889 the vane veered a little, and Charles Wyndham once more elected to appear in what seemed to his audiences a light part, but which was really a very difficult one to play. This was the character of Sam Hedley, in F. C. Burnand's three-act comedy, *The Headless Man*. In his interesting volumes of *Records and Reminiscences* Sir Francis Burnand, as he must now be called, gives the following interesting account of this ingenious and diverting play :—

“I had hit upon a first-rate eccentric character. It was originated in some papers I was then writing for *Punch*. The idea for the hero of the comedy was ‘a man with a method’—a man who considered himself so methodical that he was always lecturing others on the advantages of his own system as compared with *their* negligent way of doing business, while in reality there never was such a muddle-headed person as this monomaniac. Three characters in three other different pieces evidently started this idea. First the part of Messiter, in *A Nice Farm*, a piece (original, I believe) by Tom Taylor ; secondly, Bayle Bernard's *The Practical Man* (in both pieces I had played at Cambridge) ; thirdly, a Mr. Somebody in a one-act piece, the name of which I quite forget—nor do I think it was ever published—a part wonderfully played by Charles Mathews of a man whose brains went woolgathering, and who could not be constant to one idea for three minutes at a stretch.¹ From acquaintance with these sprang the

¹ I think Sir Francis must have been thinking of Mr. Gatherwool. It was a favourite character with Charles Mathews, and in later years W. H. Kendal successfully appeared in it.

notion of 'a man with a method,' triumphant in all his errors, while hopelessly embroiling himself and everybody who might come in contact with him in any affair of more or less importance. I had decided he was to be a solicitor ; that he was to be a married man ; and I had a vague idea of various situations and a very clear notion on the subject of dialogue and detail. But for the life of me I could not invent a plot. The character I had created was as the monster to Frankenstein. So when George Rose¹ was staying with us at Hale Lodge I asked him if he could provide me with a plot. This he undertook to do most willingly. It began well ; it offered the required opportunities ; but I felt it was thin. However, we went to work, and I am bound to say the work was play. Many a pleasant summer morning we passed in my study at Hale Lodge composing this *Headless Man*, and always with a view to its performance by Charles Mathews. When, however, it neared completion, we expressed our doubts as to whether Mathews, then over seventy years of age, speaking not so distinctly as heretofore, but acting with all his own *verve* and charm, and playing in one or two new pieces, too, could really *study* this part. We were afraid, very much afraid, that he could not. Unfortunately, as George Rose had excited Charles Mathews' curiosity by telling him a good deal about the piece, it seemed to me that, at least, we were bound to show it to him. This we did, and he professed himself ready to play the part at the first opportunity. That opportunity never came, and after the death of Charles Mathews we determined

¹ The well-known Arthur Sketchley, the author of *Mrs. Brown*.

that the next best person with whom to place it was Sothern, who had not had such a 'character' part since the days of Dundreary. To him we confided it. Sothern accepted it, said there was a lot to be done with it, and kept it for a considerable time. However, what will happen in the 'affairs of mice and men' occurred here. I quarrelled with Sothern, or, rather, Sothern quarrelled with me, about no business affair whatever, but owing to a view I took of his conduct in a certain matter that really in no way concerned me and about which I might, without any loss of self-esteem, have been silent as far as he personally was concerned, seeing that my knowledge of the affair only came to me second-hand. However, quixotically, I made a false step in refusing an invitation to dinner from Sothern, and, quite unnecessarily, stated the reason in strong terms for such refusal. The reply to this was the return of our *Headless Man*, and then I realised that my partner, George Rose, had suffered through *me*.

"It appeared subsequently, however, that Sothern had retained his own private copy of the play, which, as I learned long afterwards, he confided to Charles Wyndham (then a rising light comedian, who, since the days of *Black-eyed Susan* and his famous dance on Royalty boards, had forsworn burlesque), telling Charles Wyndham that he was at liberty to produce it, and pointing out how it could be advantageously altered and amended. Mistrusting the practical joker Sothern, and the story with which the play was introduced to him, Wyndham sagaciously kept it by him for some time, until Sothern, moved by a good impulse, re-

quested him not to do anything with it, but, if he fancied it, he was to communicate with the authors, whose names he then for the first time revealed. I liked Sothern very much ; he was most amusing, and we had passed many a pleasant time together. I think we both regretted the estrangement, and I say ‘both’ advisedly, as one day going along Garrick Street I suddenly encountered Sothern. My quarrel with him had quite gone out of my memory, and that he had momentarily forgotten the rupture of friendly relations between us was evident from his advancing to me with both his hands out, as I was approaching him in just the same attitude, our faces beaming with pleasure at the meeting.

“ ‘Hullo ! Sothern,’ I exclaimed heartily.

“ ‘Hullo ! old fellow,’ cried Sothern, with equal heartiness.

“ And then—a pause. The idea evidently struck us both at the same instant—‘Why, we’re not on speaking terms !’

“ And he turned aside and entered the Garrick Club, laughing, I am positive, as *I* turned and went my way, giving way to irrepressible mirth. The situation was one of the best and truest comedy ; a real comedy ‘comedy of errors.’ And it was one which, oddly enough, existed in the very piece written for Mathews, passed on to him, and by him to Charles Wyndham, whose performance of the principal character has been placed by good critics as one of the most artistic creations in his varied *répertoire*. The lack of female interest in the play has, I fancy, militated against its popularity, yet it

went for six weeks or so with roars of laughter, and was played to 'excellent business,' which suddenly dropped, and then the piece dropped, too, having been only occasionally revived as a stop-gap."

Except that, like all really clever men, he is modest, Sir Francis might have gone much further than that, for *The Headless Man* was a remarkably ingenious study of character, and one which will never be forgotten by those who saw its perfect delineation by Charles Wyndham, and were capable of appreciating it. Possibly it was rather too subtle for the great mass of frivolous playgoers.

I know I shall never forget how gaily the most mercurial of modern comedians rattled through the part of the absent-minded lawyer who, in the enforced absence of his two senior partners, sees to the requirements of all the clients who call; how he docketts the various documents that are entrusted to him after a fatal system of his own, with the result that counsel's opinion on a certain divorce case reaches a General, who imagines from it that he has ground for action against his wife; that he sets a pair of lovers by the ears; that he induces another lady to believe that her betrothed is a bigamist; that he reveals the intended disposition of the property of a charming widow (who thinks of entering into matrimony a second time) to the very man she wishes to be kept in ignorance; and altogether contrives, with an apparent show of the greatest intelligence, to get things into an inconceivable mess. It was all very funny and very new, but I fear its striking originality was hardly understood by the lovers of the ordinary three-act farce.

Of the revival of the play in 1893 that searching critic, William Archer, said : " In *The Headless Man* Mr. Burnand has worked out in three acts that happy thought—' Fancy, having to consult an idiot solicitor ! ' which occurs, if I mistake not, somewhere in *Happy Thoughts*. . . . The whole point of the piece lies in the delightful inconsequences of Sam Hedley, and these Mr. Wyndham delivers with a light-hearted conviction which renders them quite irresistible. It is no derogation to Mr. Wyndham's more serious powers to say that he remains easily first among the light comedians of the day."

Of the original performance, in which, by the way, Miss Mary Moore did not take part, merry " Mr. Punch " wrote as follows :—

"A PUFF OF WYND-HAM.

" During the past week the ' many-headed ' have crowded the Criterion, and have thus kept up the average in *capites* lessened by Mr. Charles Wyndham as the Headless Man. Certainly the popularity of the manager of the subterranean theatre has not suffered by his change of line. Excellent as he may be, and undoubtedly is, as David Garrick and John Mildmay, no one can touch him as Sam Hedley. There has been nothing to approach it since Sothorn was at his best in Lord Dundreary. It is a great pity, therefore, that Mr. Wyndham is bound for America, and consequently that Londoners will have to wait until his transatlantic trip is over before they can go in their hundreds and thousands to see one of the most amusing pieces of modern times.

"But perhaps, after all, the *relâche* may have its compensating advantages, as possibly when he does return ('he will return, we know him well') he may be able to show us the play with an improved cast. At the Criterion last week it was not altogether satisfactory. Mr. George Giddens was decidedly good, and Mr. W. Blakeley was—well, Mr. Blakeley—and Miss F. Paget was the pick of the ladies. But the rest! No doubt, Mr. Standing, as standing counsel for the firm (pun purely accidental—shall not occur again) was 'conscientious,' and did what he could with the part, which, however, did not seem to be much. But, then, Mr. Standing is not a Leigh Murray. Again, Mr. J. Anderson, in the rôle of Reginald Harcourt (a dashing young officer, ready to elope at a moment's notice and set the Lord Chancellor himself at defiance), was more suggestive, from a military point of view, of a quartermaster of East End volunteers than a captain of the Royal Dragoons. The ladies, too, were not particularly good—in fact, they might have been better if they had been, in fact, other ladies. Not that they were to be called sticks, although unquestionably numbering in their list a Forrest!¹ But, after all, the piece rested upon the shoulders of Mr. Wyndham, who carried it through with the greatest possible go and animation. However, when Mr. Wyndham reappears, it is to be hoped that the cast will be a *little* more satisfactory. In the meanwhile the Headless Man has everybody's good wishes for his success in America."

On his "first appearance on any stage" the Headless

¹ The part of Mrs. Hedley was taken by Miss E. Forrest.

Man was warmly welcomed by an unusually brilliant audience, and the cheaper parts of the house were crowded. In these there were some malcontents, and, on the fall of the curtain, one of them in the gallery expressed his disapproval very emphatically ; Mr. Wyndham, in a little speech, addressed himself particularly to him, calling on him specially to state his grievance. This brought about considerable shouting and tumult, which, according to at least one critic, " might certainly have been avoided by a little more tact on the manager's part." For the life of me I cannot agree with that critic. To my mind there is nothing more disgraceful in the doings of to-day than these constantly recurring first-night disturbances at our best London theatres, and I think that the manager who resolutely tries to put a stop to them is worthy of the highest praise. Why should he show " tact " by keeping silence in the face of such an outrage ? It is very much like the " tact " that induces a timid householder to feign sleep while a burglar triumphantly walks off with his belongings. The disgraceful people who hiss and howl, bellow and " boo " at the first performance of a new play are just as wantonly wicked as their ancestors who took joy in bull-baiting and cock-fighting, the difference being that instead of seeing the flesh of dumb creatures lacerated, they tear at the heart-strings of human beings—nervous actors, and, possibly, a still more anxious author. These detestable people must know that the manager does not want them to witness a play doomed to failure. He has shown his faith in it by spending time and money on its production, and if it does not answer his expecta-

tions, he is surely entitled to silent sympathy instead of obscene obloquy. Years after the first production of *The Headless Man* Charles Wyndham made a similar protest against the "boos" of a disreputable handful of first-night galleryites, and was again accused of want of "tact." Again I say all honour to him for boldly trying to put such things down. On this occasion a young man was arrested by the police for creating a disturbance. On his appearance before the magistrates it turned out that he was a fledgling clerk, and his feeble defence was—

"I did not like the play. I am very sorry."

Truly a nice censor of dramatic literature and histrionic art!

Speaking of this occurrence, Charles Wyndham said:—

"Let me say at once that I do not object in the least to the principle that an audience has as much right to show its disapproval as to mark its applause. It will do so, of course, in accordance with its nature and breeding. But no person, however ill-bred he may be, can claim that payment of admission to a theatre gives him the right to terrify and distress other visitors.

"It must be remembered that there are nervous women in the house. One lady in the stalls last night was so upset that she had to be taken home. Others were terrified. A manager must protect his audience from that sort of thing, just as he must protect himself from an organised attempt to wreck his play, whatever its merits may be."

Surely if other managers would throw "tact" to the winds, and stand shoulder to shoulder with Charles

Wyndham, the voice of the blatant "booper" would be as silent as that of the brutal bull-baiter.

I do not think that as a rule the general public have any notion of the sufferings that players undergo on the occasion of the first representation of a new play. I have seen some of the leading actors and actresses of our day almost prostrate with anxiety, and the late John Clayton, who certainly did not look like a timorous man, used to say that no success could ever compensate him for the agony he suffered on a first night.

And if practised actors endure these tortures, what must be the anguish of the poor playwright who knows that the fate of his work is trembling in the balance? Assuredly on such occasions he is better away from the theatre than in it. Do you remember the advice that was given to Thackeray's George Warrington when, in the days of long ago, his ill-fated drama was being performed and he lurked behind the scenes? "For Heaven's sake, Mr. Warrington, go and get a glass of punch at the 'Bedford,' and don't frighten us all here by your dismal countenance." Brave George Warrington! Even when he knew failure was in store for him, he faced it like a man, taking his seat, according to the custom of his days, upon the stage, whence he could see the actors of his poor piece, and a portion of the audience who condemned it; and it was not until he was in his home that his manly heart gave way and his bitter disappointment found vent.

"My dearest Theo," he says, speaking of his anxious wife, "when I went home looked so pale and white that I saw from my dear creature's countenance that the

knowledge of my disaster had preceded my return. Sampson, Cousin Hagan, and Lady Maria were to come after the play, and congratulate the author, God wot ! My friend, the gardener of Bedford House, had given my wife his best flowers to decorate her little table. There they were, the poor little painted standards—and the battle lost ! I had borne the defeat well enough, but as I looked at the sweet pale face of the wife across the table, and those artless trophies of welcome which she had set up for her hero, I confess my courage gave way, and my heart felt a pang almost as keen as any that has ever smitten it."

It is a pathetic little picture, but Thackeray thoroughly understood human nature, and, even while he trusted to his imagination, intuitively drew from the life. I wonder if our hard-hearted, thick-skinned, leaden-headed, foul-mouthed first-night play-wreckers of to-day will ever realise that by their vulgar cruelty they inflict pangs as acute as that felt by poor George Warrington at one of the most anxious moments of his life ?

On August 7th, 1889, Charles Wyndham brought his season at the Criterion to a brilliant close with a one-night revival of *Wild Oats*. As Rover he was once more full of animation and gaiety, and yet gave that touch of sentiment so necessary to the true impersonation of the kind-hearted, honourable actor, generous to a fault, and sad when he thinks of his nameless condition. Miss Mary Moore was again a sweet Lady Amaranth, and the remainder of the excellent cast was practically the same as in 1886.

At the conclusion of the comedy, and after Miss

Mary Moore, Charles Wyndham, and his company had been called and recalled, the actor-manager stepped forward and spoke the following words of farewell :—


“I stand before you burdened with a double duty—to thank you and to say good-bye. These duties appeal to me so differently. It is a pleasure to thank you ; it is a great pain to say good-bye. So much do I feel this that I am very much inclined to reverse the natural sequence, and, like the little boy, swallow the pill first, and finish up with the jam. As, however, I am not playing *The Headless Man*, it may perhaps be better if I keep to the natural order of things. In the name of Miss Moore, the rest of my company, and myself, I beg to thank you for your generous and sympathetic support during the season. The support which has crowned that season has been far beyond my anticipations ; in fact, I feel inclined to call it, without straining that elastic modesty which is the natural aptitude of every actor, success beyond its merits. When I commenced the season in January, I announced certain plays for production. It is through your countenance that I have been unable to fulfil the programme, and that I had to push *The Headless Man* and *Wild Oats* into the dog days, whilst *The Road to Ruin*¹ is relegated into a dim and distant future. If the reproving spirit of Holcroft is hovering over us, I beg to assure him most reverentially that the postponement is no fault of mine, but that it is yours. I consider it appropriate to close the season with *Wild Oats*. Three years ago I stood in

¹ Unluckily the contemplated revival was ultimately abandoned. Charles Wyndham would have made a splendid Harry Dornton.

this spot, and in this character apologised for the introduction of sentiment for the first time in this house under my management. The result, however, has been so gratifying, your support has been so hearty and so genial, that it is almost superfluous to say that sentiment will never be banished again for long from the theatre. How my transatlantic cousins will receive the innovation I have yet to learn. They are warm friends of mine, however, and I go hopeful. But perhaps they may say to me, 'We don't like your piece; we don't think much of your company; and your sentiment we can't stand.' However, as I said before, I hope this will not be the case. After a few weeks of necessary rest, I inaugurate my tour at Mr. Abbey's new theatre in Boston in October. For five months I visit the different cities in the States, each city once only, and hope to stand before you again in April. Between this time and that I shall be swayed by many conflicting emotions both on land and sea. But amongst them, however happy they may be, the great factor of my happiness will be the anticipation of seeing you again. And now comes the word which I have put off till the last. In the uncertainty of life, and of all mundane affairs, good-bye is always solemn and always painful. You have all seen at the railway station devoted friends and loving relatives separated in a moment by the departing train, and friendship, love, and gratitude are alike symbolised in a hearty grip of the hand. Ladies and gentlemen, kindly imagine for a moment that this theatre is a railway station; that you are on the platform and we in our carriage. The guard gives the signal for separation,

and we vanish from your sight ; please imagine that I grasp you all by the hand and tender you an affectionate and grateful adieu."

It is in graceful words such as these that Charles Wyndham has won his way into the hearts of his audiences.



CHAPTER IX

AMERICA REVISITED

PROBABLY as he once more crossed the Atlantic

Charles Wyndham carried with him a somewhat anxious heart, and no doubt as he sat in his deck chair he recalled memories of his former tours in the vast territory of the United States. Undoubtedly he had there undergone some strange theatrical experiences, but they all pointed to the extreme favour in which he was held by our American cousins.

Once he was timed to appear at a certain theatre—a “provincial” theatre, as we should call it—at eight o’clock. Unluckily there was a breakdown on the line, and he and his company could not reach the playhouse until half-past nine o’clock. Of course, they expected to find it deserted, but it appeared that the eager audience had waited quite patiently until nine o’clock, when the manager had come forward with a telegram in his hand, explained what had happened, and said that “Mr. Wyndham and his company would shortly arrive.” Encouraged by the prospect of seeing their favourite actor, the audience had endured another half-hour, and then, feeling that the affair was hopeless, left the theatre. As they came out Charles Wyndham met them, and,

notwithstanding the fatigue and misery of a tiring and anxious journey, greeted them with a cheery "Hallo! Here we are! Here we are again! Go back! We've arrived!" And go back they did; and in a marvelously short time the curtain was up, and the play went merrily to its belated conclusion.

Surely no actor has had greater proof of personal popularity.

On another occasion a train had been kept waiting over four hours for him, and when at last they knew who their tardy fellow-traveller was to be, the passengers had not grumbled, or, as Charles Wyndham has put it, "only grumbled on the right side." They merely thought it "a bit rough on them" that they had not been told "in time to go to the theatre."

Again, it had happened that he and his company had to wait in some obscure place for twenty-four hours before they could find a train that would lead them to their next destination. The manager of the local theatre came to him and pressed for a performance, at which the "prominent citizens of the town would be present." He consented, and as there was no time to display posters, the entertainment was announced by "runners," who, in more speedy fashion, answered the purpose of our old English "criers." Charles Wyndham then went to inspect the theatre—or rather hall—in which the play was to be given, and was amazed to find that the auditorium did not contain a single seat! "Don't you trouble about that," said the manager in reply to his expostulation, "you'll find all the chairs there to-night."

And so he did, for in the evening the hall was full of chairs and seats of all forms and sizes. Camp stools, piano stools, three-legged stools, drawing-room, dining-room, kitchen chairs—in short, anything and everything on which one might sit down. He couldn't understand it until he was informed that it was the rule of the establishment that everyone who purchased a seat should provide his own! The place was packed—the approaches to the theatre being crowded with contingents of families entering the hall, followed by negro servants carrying half a dozen chairs on their shoulders.

In 1883 he was playing in Syracuse, when, to his surprise, the Mayor of Rochester was announced. Invited into his sitting-room, he explained that it was the intention of the Rochester branch of the Grand Army of the Republic to give him a reception at Rochester. He had come over specially to inform him of this, because he thought it better that he should know what he, the Mayor, was going to say. He gave the heads of his remarks and apologised for the fact that it would be absolutely necessary to refer to the condition of Ireland in his speech, and expressed a hope that Charles Wyndham would prepare himself to make a suitable reply. When Charles Wyndham arrived in Rochester he was met by two Senators, who received him formally at the station; a little function which allowed the company to get off before him in their omnibus, with the effect that as his carriage with the Senators drove up to the hotel, the last occupant of the omnibus, one of the wardrobe ladies, was descending, with an enormous bundle in front of her, to the tune of

"See the Conquering Hero Comes," played by the military band. Charles Wyndham was escorted to the grand hall of the hotel, where the Mayor and Council were waiting to receive him, and the Mayor, who had notified him at Syracuse that he was a very bad speaker and would have to read from his notes, began, "Mr. Wyndham, Sir"—and while he cast his eyes down for the first lines of his speech, the military band outside, by one of those unpleasant coincidences, struck up Arthur Sullivan's "Pooh, pooh to you! Pooh, pooh to you!" which rather disturbed the solemnity of the occasion, which was only restored when two hundred members of the Army of the Republic filed past Charles Wyndham to shake him by the hand.

The speech concerning Ireland was disposed of very curtly by the actor prophesying that all political difficulties would be very soon settled. The English papers, when the reports came over, congratulated England on the fact that such an authority had made such a wise forecast, as, of course, after that everything was bound to come out all right. One single remark of a London paper was to the effect that however good an actor Charles Wyndham might be, *Major* Wyndham was evidently very good at conducting a campaign. As a matter of fact he had nothing whatever to do with it.

And now the question was, would, after an absence of some years, all this good feeling remain? Would the kindly people who had so cordially welcomed him as the prince of light comedians care for him in the more serious parts that he now elected to play? In

England he was always in touch with his audiences ; possibly America had half forgotten him, or those who remembered him would not like the change in his methods. Besides, was he not going to follow Sothorn, a prime favourite on American boards, in the difficult character of David Garrick, a part indelibly associated with his well-remembered and dearly loved name ? In short, would the verdict be the one he had suggested in his farewell speech at the Criterion Theatre, " We don't like your piece ; we don't think much of your company ; and your sentiment we can't stand " ?

Of course, he could always fall back on his earlier repertory, but it would be so humiliating to fail in his higher aims.

If he thought of it, he might have taken some comfort in the recollection of a story that a United States Senator once told him of a candidate for congressional honours who sought the influence and assistance of a prominent Washington politician, and invaded him with several of those nuisances to public men—letters of introduction. After reading them the influential man said, " Well, young man, on one condition I will do all that I can to assist you, but you must promise me that, if you do get into Congress, you won't steal."

The young man, ignorant of the application of these words, fired up with a tremendous sense of independence, and proudly answered, " Sir, I go into Congress *unpledged*, or *I don't go at all !* "

In the same way Charles Wyndham was unpledged, but he was anxious to reconquer the New World in his own way. Happily, all doubts were soon set at rest.

On October 14th, 1889, he "opened" Messrs. Abbey and Schoeffel's handsome New Tremont Theatre at Boston with *David Garrick*, and in every way scored a success.

Summing up the event, a well-known Boston journalist said :—

"It has taken Charles Wyndham six years to get back to America, but the halo of glory that encircles his latest appearance was worth the waiting. To be called upon to open the newest theatre of Boston, and a theatre that by its own substantial beauty, the excellence of its engaged attractions, and the pronounced enterprise of its managers, may well be placed among the first in the country, ought to satisfy the heart of the most ambitious Alexander of the Thespian world, and Mr. Wyndham, certainly to all appearances last night, appeared most contented with his position. He could hardly help that, however. There before him in the auditorium of the Tremont Theatre was a large audience, a fine audience, and an enthusiastic audience. What more could a player wish for?"

Indeed, he had good cause to be gratified. Before playgoers who had remembered Sothorn and that most popular American actor, Lawrence Barrett, in the part, and who had learned to associate him with the frivolities of farce, he had made a deep and, as it proved to be, a lasting impression in the high comedy and touching sentiment of *David Garrick*.

The critics ungrudgingly recognised it. Said one of them the next morning :—

"Wyndham looks the character to perfection. From

the moment of his entrance upon the scene—an entrance marked, by the way, by hearty and long-continued applause—he seemed to sink individuality in the portrayal. The gradation of feeling in Garrick was shown with particular skill. At first the careless, amused actor, curious only to see the outcome of a day's chance adventure; then the good-humoured seconding of the old man's plot to 'disillusionise' his darling daughter; soon the awakening to the truth that Ada Ingot is the young girl to whom he had acted with all his soul, and whom he had already learned to love—these phases of Garrick's character were set forth with an artist's touch. There is amazing life and effect in the famous 'drunken scene' of the comedy, yet never for an instant can the attentive auditor forget that Garrick is here playing his most difficult and exacting part, that all his feverish and reckless course is but simulation, though it be simulation that can but deceive the girl and her father's guests. Wyndham's *Garrick* is not great in one scene alone. It is interesting and consistent from first to last, a genuine character study, and not least effective in the closing act, which Wyndham manages with consummate skill."

Then Miss Mary Moore, who as Ada Ingot made her anxious first appearance in America, was equally successful. Of her the same critic wrote, "Her youth and beauty and naturalness of manner certainly lend themselves to the character of the romantic girl very fitly. She commands the sympathy of the audience in all her scenes, and made a very agreeable impression."

At the fall of the curtain, and after the managers of the beautiful new playhouse had been summoned to receive the congratulations of the audience, Charles Wyndham, in response to a vociferous recall (for he and his company had already acknowledged their cordial reception), stepped to the footlights, and (I again quote my critic) "with earnestness and apparently more desire to express his feelings than make a witty address, said:—

"“Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Abbey and Mr. Schoeffel, with that rare and charming modesty which distinguishes every theatrical manager and every good actor,¹ have asked me to speak for them, and convey their thanks from the bottom of their hearts for the kind reception you have accorded them this evening. It is also impossible for me to let the opportunity pass without thanking you on my own behalf for the welcome you have accorded my company and myself. When I received Messrs. Abbey and Schoeffel's invitation to inaugurate their season, I felt the honour so much that within five minutes I asked for the fastest cable so that I might send my reply. I recollect well the charming six weeks I spent in this town six years ago; they were six of the happiest weeks in my whole career. When I took leave of my friends at home I likened my theatre to a railway station, with all my kind acquaintance standing on the platform to wish me God-speed. So now I will take the liberty of likening this theatre to another station at the opposite end of the line, with all of you as my friends to bid me welcome. I assure you no weary traveller has ever appreciated so warm a reception

¹ This, of course, excited loud laughter.

as I do this. My journey was a rough one. I had ample opportunity to develop all the sentiment that lay in me. In fact, nothing appeals so much to the inner man as the rolling deep. But the deepest sentiment is brought out by this meeting with friends again. For my friends in the rear and for myself I thank you all for your cordial greeting.'"

That engagement at Boston was indeed a brilliant success. Not only was the New Tremont Theatre continually crowded, but Charles Wyndham, Mrs. Wyndham, and Miss Mary Moore became the courted guests of society. Indeed, from the social point of view, they were so much in demand that they found great difficulty in keeping pace with the eager invitations that were showered upon them.

And so it was everywhere. Throughout his tour the triumphant Charles Wyndham was entertained and fêted, and in the course of many speeches and interviews related those early American recollections of his of which I have spoken, with that added spice of fun which a man who has fought his fight and won it, and is, moreover, endowed with the most invaluable of gifts, an honest sense of genuine humour, can so beneficially rub in.

Perhaps there were some playgoers, as well as some critics, who regretted his departure from the light comedy parts in which he had no rival, and it was certain that he was roundly applauded in *The Candidate* and *The Headless Man*; but he easily held his own in his more serious parts, and so conquered all along the line.

Touring at the same time in America was the great Italian tragedian, Salvini. All English playgoers who

were fortunate enough to see him will remember the overwhelming impression he made here by his marvellous impersonation of Othello. I confess that the performance completely carried me away, and I never tire of thinking it over in all its wonderful wealth of detail. But to show how opinions may differ it is interesting to note the following brief extracts.

Our veteran critic, Joseph Knight, said :—

“Signor Salvini’s conception of Othello is what we expect from a thoughtful, perceptive, and cultivated man. Othello with him is a barbarian, whose instincts, savage and passionate, are concealed behind a veneer of civilisation so thick that he is himself scarcely conscious he can be other than he appears. Friendly, loving, and courteous, he can, as Iago says—

“ ‘As tenderly be led by the nose
As asses are.’ ”

“When the poison of jealousy ferments in the blood, the strife between the animal nature and the civilising influences of custom is long and sharp. In the end the barbarian triumphs, the concluding scene, if not wholly savage, exhibiting mere glimpses of those restraints which in the third act, though sorely tested, remain dominant. The picture is exact of a noble animal turning piteously in the toils in which it has been enmeshed, and finding its efforts at escape serve only to render its position more desperate.”

But when Salvini crossed the Atlantic, William Winter, the *doyen* of American critics, and one of the highest and most deservedly esteemed authorities on all things connected with the theatre, wrote :—

“He performed Othello—and he gave a radically wrong performance. Half of it was grossly animal and sensual, and the other half of it was hideously ferocious. You cannot find that Moor in the pages of Shakespeare. It was impossible to resist the power of Salvini’s executive dramatic genius ; but his standard was radically wrong for the English classic drama, and therefore it was rightly opposed ; for if the physical method of Salvini be correct, all the traditions of the English stage are useless, and every student of Shakespeare, from Coleridge to Dowden, has gone astray.”

Probably from a strictly Shakespearean point of view William Winter was right, but with thousands and thousands of playgoers the new Othello made the same profound sensation in America that he had done in England, and was enthusiastically received.

Travelling about from city to city, the Italian tragedian and English comedian often met, and at least on one interesting occasion were fêted at the same time. This was at the Twentieth Century Club, Chicago, on January 18th, 1890, when they both gave excellent addresses.

Signor Salvini spoke in Italian, but, according to one of the guests, his eloquent gestures and delivery were a treat to even those who did not understand the language.

The response of Charles Wyndham was a most eloquent one. He commenced by saying to the eager audience—

“I am deeply conscious of the honour you have conferred upon me by your presence this afternoon, and it is only a sense of gratitude that enables me to appear

in a character so foreign to my experience as that of a speaker beside the oratorical water-bottle. I therefore trust you will be gracious enough to make due allowance for a first appearance. Need I say I am also sensible of the honour Signor Salvini has paid me in his complimentary remarks? The fact that I am playing David Garrick to-night makes me wish that I could throw myself more completely into the character, and that, availing myself of the privileges you have always extended to your guests, I could have taken the liberty of bringing with me my old friend Dr. Johnson. I could then have braced myself to stand by his side, whilst he assumed the responsibility of addressing you. I could then have arranged with him to talk to you of his appreciation of Chicago's wonderful growth, of the picturesqueness of her lake, of the advisability of having the world's fair here, and I might have got him, perhaps, to introduce a few covert allusions to his friend's performance at Mr. Vicker's Theatre this evening. When I was invited it was suggested to me that I should make you a short address, to last about three-quarters of an hour. I have never been able to hold an audience, not even on my own native heath—the stage—for more than twenty minutes at a time, and here, with so much beauty and intellect surrounding me, the whole modesty of my nature revolts against occupying your time for more than a quarter of an hour."

In accordance with the wish of his hearers he then proceeded to give a most interesting and amusing account of his early experiences, touching lightly on most of the points mentioned in the early chapters of

this book. Concerning the days when he first found himself acknowledged as a member of the medical profession, he diverted his audience by telling them how on the strength of his diploma, the only possession he had in the world, he married.

No doubt he and Lady Wyndham often think of these early and difficult days, and congratulate themselves on all that, thanks to his enterprise and determination, has happened since. Of course, natural genius has had a great deal to do with his success, but that much to be envied qualification, unless it is coupled with hard work, is a very useless possession.

Later, the speaker dealt with the drama from a serious point of view, and wound up by saying :—

“You will see, therefore, ladies and gentlemen, that I take a high view of the mission of my art, and, as a matter of consequence, of the mission of the actor. For please remember that although the actor is called upon to represent the thoughts of others, it is he that embodies those thoughts, that clothes them with flesh and blood and nerves, that brings a pulsating reality before you. The actor’s art begins where the painter’s finishes. A painter, for instance, has a portrait to paint. He poses his model, and his experienced eye seizes upon traits of resemblance, fixes them upon the canvas by the magic of his art, and there his work is done. Not so with the actor. He first has had to study diligently the spirit and intention of his author’s words, and then conveys them on to an ideal canvas, which is represented by the conception of his part, by the dress of the character, and by the make-up of the man. So far he is on

all fours with the painter. But now the actor must advance one step further. He has, up to the present, the exterior of the character, not the character itself. He must make that character speak with appropriate voice, he must make it move with appropriate gestures, he must make it think with appropriate expression—endow it with a soul.”

How well it would be for the welfare of dramatic art if all actors took this ideal view of their work !

Much as Charles Wyndham admired the wonderful art of Salvini, he could not quite agree with his views as to the condition of the drama of yesterday and to-day. For example, when the great Italian actor said that the theatrical art is, after all, progressive, and that the actors of to-day are, as a whole, rather more capable than in the so-called palmy days of the stage, he replied :—

“I should be very guarded in venturing to differ with so high an authority on his art as Salvini. It may be premature to announce it at this time, but my impressions on this subject are just the reverse of those expressed by the Italian tragedian. The stage has no actual technique that can be handed down by the actor to future generations, as the sculptor or artist can hand down his work to become the heirloom and possession of successors through all time. The art of the stage can only vary with the varying emotions of man. Any painter may to-day or to-morrow, by a single example of a different treatment of texture, of atmosphere, of complexion, bequeath a legacy to all who come after him that will add to the illusion of his art ; but the actor

cannot do this. The greatest work of our modern stage has been to discard whatever of technique it possessed, and to condemn it as 'traditional,' or 'conventional.' In one sense this may be said to show an advance, but that it lays any foundation upon which to base a belief that the theatrical art is a progressive one I cannot realise. Emotion cannot be stereotyped ; the actor must make a fresh copy every time. To criticise the actors of the 'palmy days' is much too large an order for me to accept at short notice. Further than what I have already said I should not care to venture just now."

To show how carefully he ponders over the staging of his plays I think well to tell how, when questioned on the subject, he said that in some scenes, according to his view, elaborate stage pictures undoubtedly heighten the effect by aiding to produce the required illusion ; but in others the painter's and upholsterer's art, carried to an extreme, undoubtedly work to the detriment of the effect intended by the author, and which the actor is trying to produce.

"I cannot," he continued, "illustrate my meaning better than by referring to a sensational effect that in this country has always been introduced into a particular comedy, greatly to its detriment, as I think. I speak of it with infinite respect, for its godfather was one of the greatest stage-managers and one of the greatest artists that America has produced and cherished. I allude to the celebrated scene of the departure of the troops for the Crimea, in Robertson's *Ours*. The story is, of course, familiar to all playgoers. The hero is ordered

away on foreign service. The heroine and her friends are supposed to be watching the troops marching past their window. In England the author's conception was simply that the march should be left entirely to the imagination of the audience, while their attention should be riveted entirely on the fact that the girl is losing her lover. All the suggestion made of the march was the dull, heavy tramp of soldiers outside, and the cheering of the populace. By this means one was made to realise that regiment after regiment was passing. Now, the author's intention was simply to present the effect of the departure of the troops on the characters on the stage, and not to invite the audience to a military review. I have rarely seen a stronger dramatic effect than was produced in London by this illusion, the dull tramp of the soldiers, the hoarse voice of command, the excited shouts, and the emotions of the different characters on the stage. Thus, while it appealed to the one sense—hearing—it left the other sense—vision—free to follow the imagination.

“Here in America, however, I found the interest of the story diverted from the characters to an attempt to realise the actual march of an array of some few dozens of soldiers, three or four abreast, past a window so close to them that no pavement was possible. Most of us have seen a regiment go by, and know how inadequate are any resources of the stage to represent such a scene. To my mind it speaks volumes for the interest of the story that the effect was not destroyed by this introduction of pageantry. I remember having a long and serious chat with Mr. Wallack on the subject, in which I

found it to be his conviction that it would be impossible to bring the act to a successful close without this effect, and that, indeed, the success of the comedy was largely dependent upon this military display. I could not agree with him, but probably I was wrong."

How right he was will be understood by all who have made a real study of theatrical effect. Those who have never given a thought to the matter, but who simply look at and admire the stage pictures and illusions that are provided for them, will, if they happen to read these lines, learn something with regard to the intricacies of stagecraft, and the amount of thought that is required to make them fine out to the point of perfection.

It was during this visit to America that, in order to protect himself from that terrible nuisance to celebrities, the autograph hunter, he adopted the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain's rule of only giving his sign manual to people with whom he is personally acquainted. Accordingly he had a little card printed to that effect, and posted it to pestilent and persistent collectors who in order to gratify their own selfish hobby do not in the least degree mind the trouble they give to other and more usefully occupied people.

Amongst many letters which assailed him on his arrival was one in which the writer indulged in the most fulsome compliments, somewhat to the effect that America was prouder and better for his coming there, that its stage would benefit by his art,—and much more to the same effect,—until it wound up by saying that these facts rendered the writer bold enough to ask for his autograph.

In response to this, one of the little cards was promptly sent—and as promptly came the reply—

“Oh! you never give your autograph except to acquaintances? And who the h—ll are *you*?”

Certainly a strong contrast between the two letters!

Charles Wyndham has made unprofessional as well as professional visits to America, and I here give, with his permission, and in his own words, the story of one of his transatlantic adventures.

“It was a strange experience that greeted me at the end of my hurried rush to the West in the July of 1885, when I found myself, immediately on my arrival, in the presence of that modern inquisition, Judge Lynch. An act had been perpetrated, which, in our settled communities, was murder; there, by the mere friction of terms, it rose to a certain dignity as a vindication of the law—Lynch Law.

“The scene was a novel one, and, to me, positively startling, and in all the details of its history of a nature to remain ever in my memory.

“I was attracted, the first morning on my arrival at Lemarie City, by a crowd outside of a little undertaker’s shop; and only too ready to welcome any ripple in the monotony of life as ordered in the ‘Gem of the Rockies,’ I pressed forward to learn the cause of the excitement. I was soon borne along by the crowd, and, thanks to the glorious freedom of the Western citizen, was shouldered through the doorway into the little shop, past threatening-looking piles of planks, past two or three empty coffins, upreared on end like sentry-boxes,

which afforded profitable opening for the display of modern wit ; past other planks, out of the little shop into a small apartment at the back.

“Here the crowd was thicker, and the wit seemed to grow brighter by attrition. And what a crowd ! A mixture only to be found on a transcontinental route. Here the light-complexioned Englishman, as personified by Lord de Clifford and half a dozen brother sportsmen ; there the swarthy Spaniard, by his side again a dandy of Lamarie City, and he, in turn, elbowed by the bespattered cow-boys, redolent of the plains.

“In the centre of the room, under the light of a skylight, on some rude planks formed into a rude table by a pair of trestles, lay the body of a man in the first flush of strength and manhood. His age could not have exceeded twenty-six or seven. A long, oval face, with straight-cut features, surmounted by a shock of light hair ; a tawny moustache and spare pointed beard of the same colour shaded the lines of the mouth, but could not rob the face of a wild, resolute look ; a handsome face withal, even in the ghastly hue of death.

“The man wore the rough costume of a frontiersman—not the inevitable red shirt ; in this instance it was blue, in contrast with the dull fustian colour of the trousers ; coat he had none, nor were the boots there. His feet were bare, and the trousers were rolled half-way up to show a bullet-wound in one of his legs. The artistic horror of the picture was supplied by a rope, neatly coiled up in sailor fashion and lying across his breast, one end in a spliced noose round the dead man’s neck, the other grimly bearing witness to the finger-

marks where the lynchers had tailed on. Across the coil lay a pair of powerful hands, the right one pierced by a heavy bullet.

“‘What’s all this about?’ I inquired of one of the bystanders.

“‘Lynched,’ was my neighbour’s reply, ‘for walking off with Fordice’s sorrel mare without any invitation.’

“‘Who lynched him?’ I asked.

“‘Well, you see, it’s kinder hard to say, ’cause the boys had all wrapped their heads up in flour bags not to catch cold. There’s been a good many horses lately found their way to Texas, and most men that had horses had rather have the selling of them themselves. Then, you see,’ he added argumentatively, ‘when the lawyers get hold of these things you never know how they’ll turn out. So perhaps this was the neatest way of doing the job.’

“‘He was a thoroughbred, tho’, was Si Partridge,’ said another bystander.

“I came away from this place, for I had over a forty miles’ ride to accomplish that day, and, bidding my new acquaintances good-bye, I started off; but all through that ride, over that mountainous, unfrequented country, the dull scene of that morning was constantly before me with painful vividness—the brutal jests of the cow-boys and the stoic indifference of the crowd.

“I did not dream that I, personally, should be connected, in however small a degree, with this tragical event.

“On the slope of the Rockies, eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, and nearly fifty miles from

the scene of the previous morn, I awoke prepared for a ride over the ranche of my host. At the appointed hour I stood ready for the mount which had been placed at my disposal.

“‘You’ll find her quiet enough, I guess,’ said the foreman as he was standing at the girths to get the huge saddle down to the poor shrunken withers of a big, raking, sorrel mare, with long, lean flanks and jaded, lack-lustre eyes. ‘I’m sorry I can’t find you something better, but the party is a large one, and our stock is mostly out. But you’ll find her quiet enough. A month ago I wouldn’t have answered for her, but it’ll take more than a month now on this mountain grass to make her what she was before Si Partridge got across her.’

“‘You don’t mean to say this is the horse Partridge stole—the horse they lynched him for?’

“‘Yes, sir, that is the mare. Leastways, that is the shadder of her, and that’s the saddle, too, and that’s the barn he took her from. That’s ’ow I spotted him. Whoa, girl! Yes, sir, fifteen hundred miles she carried him before ’e found that halter round ’is neck.’

“And this was the very sorrel mare—the animal I was about to ride! Here stood the cause, for struggle as I would, I could not disabuse my mind that, somehow or other, the mare had been the responsible agent throughout—the fate—the demon that had lured poor Partridge to his doom.

“More to divert my thoughts from the morbid channel they were running in than from any real curiosity—for the drama in me was all in the dénouement—I ques-

tioned my host as we rode along as to the earlier history of the case.

"It seems that Partridge had long enjoyed an evil reputation. From early days he had earned his claim to rank among the 'bad lot.' Already there were one or two he had marked, and had been marked by them to 'shoot down at sight.'

"Arrested some two years before for some little defect, he had been released through the insane but noble sacrifice of a loving sister, whose devotion he rewarded shortly after by levanting with her watch and any other portable property he could lay his hands on. Since then his life was unknown to honest men. He became a wandering specimen of the wandering states and territories, turning up occasionally in his old haunts, and disappearing again without any apparent aim or purpose. This mode of life naturally gave him a very extended knowledge of the geography of the country; and how many 'strays' had profited by that knowledge in their long journey into Texas is, of course, a matter of surmise. It was on one of these visitations lately that he had claimed hospitality at the ranche of my host. He was fed and lodged there for a night—for in that country everyone is welcome to this—and then took his leave. A night after, the sorrel mare disappeared; but as a saddle and bridle disappeared with her, it was hardly possible to attribute the combination to the mare's own cussedness.

"The ranche lies far from the line of trail, so it was impossible to impute the mare's disappearance to any fortuitous intentions of a tramp. Furthermore, the

selection of a new saddle, kept in a particular stall in one of the barns, seemed to argue very consistently familiarity with the premises. Suspicion pointed to Partridge ; the hue-and-cry was raised, and two deputed sheriffs at once started in pursuit.

“Once on this scent, the chase was hotly urged, for in the gloomy solitude of these mountains farther to the south, popular repute has located a ‘horse-camp,’ a centre for the operations of these desperadoes, where the stolen horses are gathered until a bunch of thirty or forty warrants the journey into Texas. For miles around the charmed circle of this camp pursuit becomes impossible. In the dense pine forests, at every step, the way is blocked by fallen timber—the decaying trunks of bygone giants. Here, once the track is lost, progress for man or beast is hopeless, and the fugitive, versed in every double of the trail, can snap his fingers with impunity at his pursuers.

“Partridge, it seems, however, was unable to reach this spot—the sheriffs were too close upon him—for, instead of following the trail, he turned abruptly to the west and struck out for Utah, straight across half the State of Colorado. This sudden change of plan served his turn, and it was only in Utah that the sheriffs, assisted by fresh mounts afforded as they passed along, came up to him again. This time he turned short round and made for the North Park—a second time baffling his followers. And now, once again, was the same ground covered as he tried to evade pursuit, and a second time reached Utah in safety.

“Realise as I tried to realise, whilst bestriding that

poor, patient beast, this mad gallop against fate, this wild chase day by day, night by night, through the gloomy pine woods, the frowning cañons, over the snow-clad divides, across the roaring torrents—by sunlight—by starlight across the smiling plains, the dreary wastes of alkali—back and forth and back again, relentless avengers ever in the wake. One moment in some mountain gulch the pursuing hoofs are heard ringing out clearly in the night air, approaching, approaching how quickly! The dreadful agony of that moment until the winged feet fly past, and the echoing sounds fade slowly, slowly—oh, how slowly—down into the deep mystery of the cañon far ahead into the West. Then the crouching figure, emerging from the shadow of some great boulder, the quivering mare, the cruel lunge of the spurs as she wheels round, and horse and rider dashing back up the ravine are seen as a speck of black against that cold streak of dawn that marks the top of the divide. Remember, the distance between these points is not less than three to four hundred miles, and each time the desperado must have travelled out of his way in order to avoid any settlements or ranches along the route of his former journeys, where his exploits would necessarily have been known; and then, think of the suffering of man and beast.

“To the end, he baffled, by his cunning, the sleuth-hound of the law—but Nemesis overtook him! The poor mare that had borne him so nobly was at last done—dead beaten. He, on the last journey, traded her for a horse, and so once more established a clue to his whereabouts. It was no longer the officer of the law,

armed with strength of authority, he had to fly from ; it was a dilettante detective now—a little ranchman—actuated by the reward offered, or by a sense of the common danger—that clung to his heels ; a man with fresh nerve, fresh horse, fresh strength ; and so again a mad ride began.

“For two days the new hunter follows the trail, and on the third, perhaps to his own dismay, he comes in sight of his quarry. Had the arbiter, in any question of supremacy, been between him and Partridge, the little ranchman would in all probability have gone to the ground ; but fatigue and fasting have demoralised the fugitive. He no longer pauses to raise even a pistol. Flight alone he thinks of, and from a man he could have brushed from his path. It is all over. The sharp crack of a pistol rings out in the still air, and the bullet strikes Partridge on the wrist. Another, and another, and a bullet goes crashing through Partridge’s leg, and his horse falls dead under him.

“One last flicker of the old fire is left to the wretched man. Before his horse reaches the ground, he snatches his pistol from his holster, and steadying himself upon the horn of the big Mexican saddle, he prepares to cover his assailant. The little ranchman’s position is a terrible one, for he has no more ammunition. ‘Hands up!’ he cries, with a sudden inspiration, pointing the empty barrel at Partridge. ‘Hands up, you ——, or I will finish you in your tracks!’ The pistol drops from the bleeding, miserable man, and the long ride is done.

“Bound hand and foot, he was taken back by the little ranchman to Lamarie, and there locked up.

“‘But how,’ I inquired of my host, ‘was he lynched? You say he was locked up.’

“‘So he was, but, you see, the boys began to think he was not safe in Lamarie, so they prevailed on the sheriff to take him down to Red Butte, twelve miles east of Lamarie. The sheriff seemed to think so, too. He knows the boys’ (with a knowing look). ‘So at ten o’clock at night Si is taken out of the lock-up, still bound hand and foot, and placed into a buggy by the side of the sheriff, who puts out at once for Red Butte. Well, they only go to the bridge over the creek, three miles out, when six masked figures emerge from the shadow of the fence. Two of them lay hold of the team by the bridles, and the other four go up, revolvers in hands, to the sheriff, mildly suggesting that it is not safe to be driving out so late—that he’d better leave Si along with them, and drive back to Lamarie just as fast as his team could carry him.’

“‘Well?’

“‘Well, there is not much arguing with four revolvers when they look as if they mean business. So the sheriff hands Si over, and jogs the team back to town.’

“‘And Si?’

“‘Had grit to the last. Bound hand and foot, with a bullet through his leg and one of his hands smashed, he saw at once there was not a living show for him. ‘Well, boys,’ he said, ‘I suppose it’s all over?’ ‘Yes,’ was the cold but emphatic reply. ‘Well, good-bye, boys.’ ‘Good-bye,’ they answered, as they put the necktie round him and whipped him up to the cross-bar of Hutton’s gate.’

“‘And what became of the sheriff?’

“‘He came to town, got some more of the boys, and went back for the body.’

“But the bane of the sorrel mare clung even to the little ranchman. Before I left the country he was in a madhouse. The night after Partridge’s death he was awakened by the sound of a man climbing up to the fanlight that surmounts every hotel door in America. Alarming the inmates, every search was made for the intruder, but in vain. The next night it was the same—with a similar result. He grew uneasy; he moved to another hotel, but in vain. Now he knew what it meant: he was marked; the avenger was on his track. He had been doomed by some of Si Partridge’s gang; by night or day, no more rest for him! The horror of his situation, his impending fate, turned his brain, and before a week had elapsed since his victim’s death, he was mad.

“I rode the mare for some miles that day—and then changed mounts with my son. Mental anguish had given place to physical agony. The poor mare changed her feet every second lift, she was so stiff and sore. So was I for days after!”

Here is another little anecdote that belongs to American experiences.

When Lord Lorne was Governor-General of Canada, Princess Louise and he once started out for a tour through the southern States. They were travelling in a special train along the same line on which Charles Wyndham was travelling with his company in a special

carriage attached to an ordinary train. It was understood that the royal train would catch up his and be tacked on to it *en route*. The company were very much interested in the crowds that they saw waiting at every railway station. By the curiosity that their carriage attracted it soon dawned upon them that the bystanders were looking out for the Royalties. Their eyes were generally directed towards Miss Mary Rorke, then the handsome leading lady of Charles Wyndham's company. The actors soon fell into the joke. There was an eccentric light comedian known as Hamilton Astley, a very airy young gentleman indeed, with a light flaxen moustache, an eyeglass, and a fur coat. Whenever Miss Rorke or Hamilton Astley addressed any of the rest of the company, hats were immediately doffed. Whenever they promenaded through the stations all the men of the company followed uncovered, and the crowd followed closely on their heels to get a view of the Princess and the Governor-General, with the pleasant result that when these two did actually pass through about an hour later, there were no crowds to welcome them at the stations, and they passed through unnoticed. The Princess has often laughingly referred to this to Charles Wyndham since, saying what a nice quiet journey they had.

The 1889 tour—during the whole of which the indefatigable Charles Wyndham actually directed the affairs of the Criterion by cablegram!—ended as brilliantly as it had commenced, and the home welcome of the triumphant little company was an enthusiastic one. The following extracts from an “open letter”

addressed to its chief, and which appeared in a journal which, I believe, no longer exists, voiced the general view of London playgoers :—

“We all welcome you. For while St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Berlin, on this side of the broad Atlantic, have been surpassed by Chicago, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington, Boston, and New York, on the other side, in the heartiness of metropolitan welcomes, yet great London’s welcome will find the heartiest response in your British heart, and one dearer than any echo in your cosmopolitan brain.

“Americans, doubtless, remind you how, as Union Army Surgeon during their Civil War, you made hundreds of homes happy by your skill and work of restoration ; but Englishmen best remember how your civil peace—not to say your dramatic pieces—has made John Bull’s homes happy. It is, perhaps, unfortunate for the actor, that while he hears the impromptu applause of his audience he cannot follow them to their homes and there hear the well-thought-out plaudits at supper-tables ; in chambers into which reminiscences of perfect personations guide pleasant dreams ; or at breakfast-tables, when the events of the happily passed evenings alternate with toast and chocolate, or with the culinary essays that ‘bacon’—lord of a British breakfast-table—inspires. The great actor may hazily hear of such plaudits, but he cannot realise them. If he could realise them he would have more satisfaction in his feelings as regards his early struggles, his slavery of rehearsals, his

weary waitings, his evening banishments from social enjoyments, and his frequent drafts upon brain and general health when the inevitable curtain and crowded theatre and call-boy demand sacrifices of time and pluck.

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“Unfortunately only a moiety of your world-wide audiences know you as the gentleman of private life, as the faithful friend, as an electric light at dinner-tables, in drawing-rooms, or as the social wit who depends not upon the written words of authors or stereotyped cues, as an essence of quiet but effective generousities, as the practitioner of the eleventh commandment, ‘Love thy neighbour as thyself.’”

And now, in the late autumn of 1904, Charles Wyndham is to commence another American tour, opening, under the management of Daniel Frohman, at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, in the perennial *David Garrick*, and with Miss Mary Moore in her universally popular character of Ada Ingot.

CHAPTER X

LAST YEARS AT THE CRITERION

IT was in *David Garrick* that the travellers received their welcome home, and the play might have had another long run ; but on May 10th Charles Wyndham was ready with a long-contemplated revival of *She Stoops to Conquer*. In this he appeared as Young Marlow to the Hardcastle of William Blakeley, the Tony Lumpkin of George Giddens, the Mrs. Hardcastle of Miss A. Victor, and the Miss Hardcastle of Miss Mary Moore. The last named was a most fascinating performance.

But somehow this production did not find favour with a certain section of the critics, who declared that Goldsmith's comedy was played in too farcical a vein. Complaints were made as to the laughter created by Young Marlow's hesitation and ultra-shyness ; it was said that Blakeley, instead of being a sententious, well-informed, and rather stately character, was a fatuous old gentleman, who, having been made the butt of his young visitor, becomes a laughing-stock, and that the Tony Lumpkin of George Giddens was a mischievous, rattle-pated youth, not by any means obtuse, but rather cunning than otherwise, and notwithstanding his pot-house companions, retaining the manners of a gentleman.



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MISS MARY MOORE AS "MISS HARDCASTLE" IN "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER"

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I confess that I find it difficult to follow such criticism as this. If Hardcastle had not been a rather silly old person, he would not have been so easily played upon by his innocently impudent guests. Considering his environment, it is impossible to think of Tony Lumpkin without a spice of education and good breeding ; and if Goldsmith did not mean audiences to laugh at his comedy, what on earth did he mean ?

The year was a busy one at the Criterion. Charles Wyndham and Miss Mary Moore scored greatly as Citizen Sangfroid and Pauline, in Dance's evergreen comedietta, *Delicate Ground*, and delighted audiences in a very pretty comedy called *Sowing and Reaping*, by C. Vernon, an author whose name was new at the time, and who has not, I think, been heard of since.

Let me here mention that Charles Wyndham has always been kind in encouraging young authors, though, unfortunately, he rarely finds anything good in the bales of manuscript submitted to him.

In this connection he has had, in common with his brother managers, some strange experiences. On one occasion he received a manuscript nine pages long and typewritten. Each page would have taken less than a minute to act, and so the piece would have lasted about eight minutes ; but the letter that accompanied the work offered to solve that difficulty. It ran as follows :—

“ May I ask your consideration of this play ? I think you will admit that it is very funny. It is, I know, rather shorter than one-act plays usually are ; but I am a prominent amateur actor of some long experience, and I am convinced that if you will only let me play the part, the audience won't mind how short the play is.”

Poor, misguided aspirant to dramatic fame! He little knew the bitter irony of his concluding words!

But the things that the unacted dramatist will do are almost inconceivable. J. L. Toole once showed me a letter in which a would-be author said:—

“DEAR SIR,—I am in pecuniary difficulties, and therefore I have written a play. Will you kindly send me the usual fees at once, as I am being pressed.

“Yours sincerely, “ETC., ETC.”

It need hardly be said that the play was as hopeless as its author's idea of a would-be playwright's immediate remuneration.

Charles Wyndham has also been very good-natured in placing his theatre at the disposal of authors anxious to exploit their plays at afternoon performances, and others wishful to give proof of their histrionic merits.

A friend once asked Charles Wyndham to exploit a clever reciter, who, having won favour elsewhere, was anxious to try his fortune in London. Charles Wyndham at once arranged a socially representative function, issuing cards, “Mr. Wyndham, At Home—recital—tea afterwards on the stage—requests the pleasure of your company,” and so forth. Amongst those invited was Mr. Gladstone, who cordially accepted. Society accepted, too. The day—a mid-July day—proved intensely hot, and the theatre was crammed. Charles Wyndham escorted Mr. Gladstone to his box. “Won't you remain here with me?” asked Mr. Gladstone. His host explained he had retained a box immediately above Mr. Gladstone, so as to be free

to attend to business matters. The curtain rose upon an already perspiring and almost expiring audience, and the reciter advanced.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I shall have the honour of reciting to you 'Elaine,' by Alfred Tennyson." "Elaine" on a blazing hot July day in a theatre packed! Charles Wyndham scented danger, and from his upper box watched his guests. The reciter was good, but inevitably wearisome to an audience listening for an unduly long time to the monotony of a single voice in a veritable Turkish bath. Visions of quietly retiring to the open air rose to gasping guests, but Charles Wyndham had to think of the reciter's feelings. If anybody stirred Wyndham's body was half out of the box, and Wyndham's eye was on the restive one. The audience recognised they had accepted Wyndham's recital and Wyndham's tea, so everybody felt constrained to stay. The recital terminated, and Charles Wyndham joined Mr. Gladstone. "Afraid you've had a trying time with all this heat, Mr. Gladstone," he said. "Not at all," was the reply, "I have had a charming afternoon. I thank you for asking me, and now, quite refreshed, I can run back to the House." Charles Wyndham was elated. "Elaine" was a success after all! He rushed to the stage and found his guests waiting for him and for tea. "What have we done to you," they cried, "to give us 'Elaine' on a day like this? Surely there was something lighter to choose?" "Lighter," retorted their host, "that's the trouble with you Society people, you're all so frivolous. I gave you a classic treat. Why, Gladstone has just told me he had a *delightful* afternoon."

"Of course he has," was the rejoinder, "for he was asleep all the time."

It seems that directly Mr. Gladstone arrived he dropped into a chair, and, with his head gracefully leaning on his hand, composed himself for a quiet slumber, which peacefully endured during the entire recitation. Charles Wyndham at once realised how very cleverly the Right Hon. Mr. Gladstone had scored off him.

On November 27th, 1890, Dion Boucicault's *London Assurance* was revived, the characters for the first time wearing the costumes of the period in which the comedy was written. They were picturesque, and it was interesting to see the frilled shirts and the tightly strapped-down trousers affected by our forefathers. Charles Wyndham was the Dazzle, Miss Mary Moore the Grace Harkaway, and the admirable company with the familiar old names was strengthened by the engagement of William Farren for Sir Harcourt Courtley; Arthur Bouchier (who then made his first appearance on Criterion boards) for Charles Courtley; Cyril Maude (so soon to make a deservedly great name for himself) as Cool; and Mrs. Bernard Beere for Lady Gay Spanker. Is it heresy to say that to my mind *London Assurance* is a very much overrated play?

For my part I can never see it without thinking how Charles Dickens said:—

"Shall I ever forget Vestris, in *London Assurance*, bursting out with certain praises (they always elicited three rounds) of a—of a country morning, I think it was? The atrocity was perpetrated, I remember, on a lawn before a villa. It was led up to by flower-pots.

The thing was as like any honest sympathy, or honest English, as the rose-pink on a sweep's face on May-day is to a beautiful complexion; but Harley generally appeared touched to the soul, and a man in the pit always cried out, 'Beau-ti-ful.'"

It may be necessary to explain to some of my readers that Madame Vestris and Harley were the original Grace Harkaway and Mark Meddle in Boucicault's comedy, first produced at Covent Garden in 1841—and playgoers of to-day may recognise the fact that the same artificial, but theatrically effective lines, make the same impression upon an ordinary audience as they did in those days of long ago.

The April of 1891 witnessed a very beautiful revival of *The School for Scandal*. Charles Wyndham, universally acknowledged to be the best Charles Surface of his day, had surrounded himself with a splendid cast. William Farren repeated his fine rendering of Sir Peter Teazle; Arthur Bouchier was an excellent Joseph Surface; and Mrs. Bernard Beere was an effective Lady Teazle. Other parts were admirably played by H. H. Vincent, William Blakeley, Cyril Maude, George Giddens, Sydney Valentine, and Miss M. A. Victor. Miss Mary Moore played very sweetly in the decidedly thankless part of Maria, and Miss Ellaline Terriss made one of her earliest appearances as the waiting-maid. In December, 1891, *Brighton* was once more revived, and Bob Sackett received his old and cordial welcome; but he had to make way on April 30th, 1892, for *The Fringe of Society*, a clever adaptation, by an anonymous author, of the younger Dumas'

much-discussed play, *Le Demi-Monde*. Charles Wyndham's new part of Sir Charles Hartley, R.A., a somewhat middle-aged and *blasé* man of the world, suited his later style well, and he played it with great effect, alternating a light and pleasant touch with flashes of really powerful acting and many moments of deep feeling. This strong yet adroitly blended contrast of light and shade in his acting has always been most effective. In *The Fringe of Society* Miss Mary Moore scored another great success, and other important characters were taken by F. H. Vanderfelt, William Blakeley, Cyril Maude, Miss Carlotta Addison, Miss Ellis Jeffreys, and Mrs. Langtry.

In May, at a series of matinées, a charming comedy, by Isaac Henderson, entitled *Agatha*, was produced. The cast was a remarkable one; Charles Wyndham, who was excellent as a shrewd but tender-hearted American, being surrounded by Lewis Waller, Herbert Waring, Charles Fulton, Laurence Cautley, Miss Winifred Emery, Miss Rose Leclercq, Miss Olga Nethersole, and Miss Mary Moore. In the following December, under the altered title of *The Silent Battle*, the play was promoted to the evening bill. It was also toured in the provinces with the old Criterion favourite, Miss Eastlake, in the leading lady's part, but for some unknown reason it never achieved the popularity it deserved.

In the same year Charles Wyndham and Miss Mary Moore appeared in one of S. Theyre Smith's comediettas (how his name conjures up happy memories of *A Happy Pair*, *Uncle's Will*, and *A Case for Eviction!*), called *Mrs. Hilary Regrets*.

As the ship sails within sight of the coast of home the passenger begins to lose interest in the voyage, for there are no longer things to attract his attention in seas that he has never seen before and may never see again. So it is with a book like this. As it draws to a conclusion readers will only want to be briefly reminded of those recent achievements of Charles Wyndham which are happily familiar to them as household words. Therefore it is my task to touch upon them lightly.

With this idea in view, I shall deal far less fully than I ought to do with the group of plays—*The Bauble Shop*, *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, *The Physician*, and *The Liars*—with which Henry Arthur Jones supplied the Criterion, and which were produced respectively on January 26th, 1893, October 3rd, 1894, March 25th, 1897, and October 6th, 1897. They were all good, and each of them contained a part that suited Charles Wyndham well. Whether as Viscount Clivebrook, the indiscreet but sound-hearted Cabinet Minister of the first play; Sir Richard Cato, the high-minded Queen's Counsel of the second; Dr. Lewin Carey, the thoughtful, lovable, well-contrasted central figure of the third; or as Colonel Christopher Deering in the fourth—he is alike excellent. They are parts after his own heart—characters of cultured men of the world, veneered with cynicism, yet giving him scope for that subtle touch of tenderness that we are now accustomed to associate with his acting, and abundant opportunity for the display of the high comedy of which he is an acknowledged master.

The Liars is, indeed, considered by many critics to be

the best comedy of its period, and on its revival at the New Theatre in the June of the present year, 1904, Mr. Punch (not given to overpraise) said :—

“Mr. Henry Arthur Jones’s comedy of *The Liars* deserves to be ranked among the classics of the Victorian Era. Its freshness, which is that of an entire novelty, is perfectly preserved by the admirable cast provided for it by Sir Charles Wyndham. As good wine improves with age, so do some good plays, and this one is an example in point. Its weak feature, as occasionally happens with our Henry Arthur, is the last act. Here is our old friend the man hiding behind the curtain, for which situation Henry Arthur has a deeply rooted affection, as instanced in his latest comedy at the Haymarket.

“Sir Charles Wyndham, as Colonel Sir Christopher Deering, gives us the very best taste of his quality, modulating his tone from grave to gay, from lively to severe. The most difficult parts, viz. Edward Falkner, gallant hero and seducer, Gilbert Nepean, the uncouth husband, and his brother, George Nepean, the suspicious sneak, are admirably rendered, ‘with conviction’ is the modern phrase, by Mr. Dennis Eadie, Mr. Eille Norwood, and Mr. Bertram Steer.

“As the earnest noodle, Freddy Tatton, Mr. Sam Sothern is delightful ; and Mr. A. Bishop absolutely irresistible as the fussy, correct, and old-fashioned husband of the accommodating Dolly Coke, so amusingly rendered by Miss Sarah Brooke.

“The modern easy-going married woman, with the whip-hand of her nervously weak spouse, is played to

the life by Miss Enid Spencer-Brunton ; and equally good is Miss Cynthia Brooke, whose Beatrice Ebernoe belongs to the modern school for scandal. As honest and cheery Mrs. Crespin, Miss Lilian Waldegrave seconds Sir Charles Wyndham in a rather trying scene in the last act of the play. Miss Sybil Williams' slight part of Lady Jessica's maid, Ferris, is given its full importance in the scheme without being in the least overdone. Miss Mary Moore has rarely had a better part, nor a more trying one, except, perhaps, in *The Tyranny of Tears*, than that of the *tête de linotte* Lady Jessica Nepean, where all the art consists in never once gaining the sympathy of the audience for this amusing and irritating character.

"*The Liars* should be in for another long run, as it is one of the best acted and most amusing pieces now to be seen in London."

And in each of the four pieces I have mentioned the dramatist succeeded in finding parts exactly suited to the ever winsome style of Miss Mary Moore (how delightful she was as the Rebellious Susan !), and has enabled other artists to add to their reputations. Nor must it be forgotten how charmingly Miss Marion Terry acted in *The Physician*.

Truly a bright array of feathers in the cap of Henry Arthur Jones !

In connection with the first production of *The Liars*, Charles Wyndham once told me an amusing little story.

In the last act Miss Cynthia Brooke, as Beatrice, had to enter the room where he was with the words, " Kit,

I was dining out when your letter came, but I hurried here as soon as I could." On entering her foot caught something, and she fell flat on her face in the centre of the stage. With the instinct of every actor to cover up an accident of that kind by speaking at once, she, before he could bend down to assist her, lifted up a very white, distressed face, and tousled head of hair, and cried, "Kit, I've been dining out!" The audience saw at once the mistake, with the absurdity of the words, and roared with laughter, not only then, but all through the act whenever he had to say effusively, "Only one woman," as he had frequently to exclaim, nor had he more control over himself than had the audience.

At about this time, or a little later, he and Miss Moore had promised Lord and Lady Aberdeen to play a comedietta at their house during a concert for some charity benefit. When, however, they arrived they found that the only platform was a large dinner-table on which the singers stood, far too small to put chairs, a sofa, a breakfast-table, and a writing-table on. Sir Charles explained this to Lord Aberdeen, who was most solicitous and regretful, offering to make a larger stage by adding more tables. "You can't," said Sir Charles Wyndham, "your platform is at the further end of the room, which room has only one door, this one at this end."

"We can easily carry the tables down to the other end," replied Lord Aberdeen.

"Impossible!" was the reply. "Your room is crowded, and you can't disturb your audience now. It's too late."

"No, I suppose so," answered Lord Aberdeen. "Can we do nothing?"

"Nothing."

"No, I suppose not. I'm so sorry."

"It doesn't matter. You have a splendid concert."

"Oh, yes, a very fine concert."

"And you have your room full as it is."

"Yes, yes, quite full."

"You couldn't get any more in if you tried?"

"No, we couldn't." (Lord Aberdeen in his solicitude echoed everything Charles Wyndham said.)

"And I'm sure we shan't be missed."

"No, I'm sure you won't."

It was many months before Lord Aberdeen heard from a mutual friend of his little mistake, when he was profuse in his apologies, and he and Sir Charles Wyndham often laugh at it still.

Between *The Bauble Shop* and *The Case of Rebellious Susan* came an attractive adaptation, from the pen of Lady Violet Greville, of *Le Gendre de Mons. Poirier*, entitled *An Aristocratic Alliance*.

Another dramatist whose name will live in these Criterion annals is R. C. Carton. For his play, *The Home Secretary*, Charles Brookfield, Lewis Waller, Sydney Brough, and Miss Julia Neilson were engaged. Miss Mary Moore had a part that suited her well, but as the Right Hon. Duncan Trendel, M.P., Charles Wyndham had no great acting opportunities. In the same writer's *The Squire of Dames*, an adaptation from *L'Ami des Femmes* of Dumas fils, he fared better, and the well-

drawn character of Mr. Kilroy was one after his own heart. This was the play chosen for the "command" performance before Her Majesty Queen Victoria at Osborne, to which allusion has been made in a former chapter—the performance that, in consequence of the sad death of Prince Henry of Battenberg, had to be postponed at the last moment. It is interesting in these pages to preserve a copy of the programme that never was used.

OSBORNE,

Monday January 27th, 1896, at 9.30.

The Comedy in Four Acts, by R. C. CARTON, entitled—

THE SQUIRE OF DAMES.

(Adapted from *L'Ami des Femmes* of Alex. Dumas fils.)

Mr. Kilroy	MR. CHARLES WYNDHAM.
Colonel Dennant	MR. FRANK FENTON.
Sir Douglas Thornburn	MR. BERNARD GOULD.
Lord Eustace Chetland	MR. H. DE LANGE.
Professor Dowle, F.R.S.	MR. ALFRED BISHOP.
Baines	MR. R. LISTER.
Servant	MR. C. TERRIC.
Mrs. Dowle	MISS GRANVILLE.
Elsie	MISS BEATRICE FERRAR.
Zoe Nuggetson	MISS FAY DAVIS.
Adeline Dennant	MISS MARY MOORE.

Acts I., II., and III. . . . Drawing-room at Mrs. Dennant's.
 Act IV. . . . Professor Dowle's Library.

Scenery by WALTER HANN.

Stage Director MR. H. DE LANGE.
 Manager MR. E. HARVEY.

It will be seen that for *The Squire of Dames* Miss Fay Davis was engaged. This was the first appearance of that charming actress in an English comedy theatre.

On May 1st, 1896, Charles Wyndham performed wonders. He had now been the sole manager of the Criterion Theatre for twenty years, and he resolved

to celebrate the event in no half-hearted way. On behalf of the charity that he made up his mind to help he asked his brother and sister artists to support him, and they willingly placed their time and services at his disposal. There was a performance at the Lyceum Theatre in the afternoon, and at the Criterion Theatre in the evening, and the interest of the event will be judged from the following programmes, destined to become historic.

The following was the bill of the Lyceum performance :—

The performance will commence at 1.30 with

A CLERICAL ERROR.

By HENRY ARTHUR JONES.

Rev. Richard Capel	.	.	.	.	MR. WILSON BARRETT.
Dick Capel (his Nephew)	.	.	.	.	MR. EDWARD IRWIN.
Perry (the Butler)	.	.	.	.	MR. AMBROSE MANNING.
Minnie Heritage	.	.	.	.	MISS MAUD JEFFRIES.

Scene—The Vicarage Parlour.

After which will be played the First Act of

MONEY.

By LORD LYTON.

Alfred Evelyn	.	.	.	.	MR. TREE.
Sir John Vesey	.	.	.	.	MR. W. BLAKELEY.
Sir Frederick Blount	.	.	.	.	MR. CHARLES HAWTREY.
Captain Dudley Smooth (introduced into Act I.)	.	.	.	.	MR. BANCROFT.
Graves	.	.	.	.	MR. LIONEL BROUGH.
Lord Glossmore	.	.	.	.	MR. HERBERT WARING.
Stout	.	.	.	.	MR. H. KEMBLE.
Sharp	.	.	.	.	MR. JAMES FERNANDEZ.
Sir John's Servant	.	.	.	.	MR. ARTHUR ROBERTS.
Clara Douglas	.	.	.	.	MRS. TREE.
Georgina Vesey	.	.	.	.	MISS WINIFRED EMERY.
Servant	.	.	.	.	MISS C. GRANVILLE.
Lady Franklin	.	.	.	.	MRS. BANCROFT.

Scene—Drawing-room at Sir John Vesey's.

PROGRAMME OF MUSIC.

1. OVERTURE	.	"Der Freischutz"	.	.	<i>Weber.</i>
2. BALLET EGYPTIEN	.	.	.	.	<i>Luigini.</i>
3. ALLEGRO	.	"Feramors"	.	.	<i>Rubinstein.</i>
4. } SLAVONIAN DANCES	.	.	.	.	<i>Dvorak.</i>
5. }	.	.	.	.

The following ladies have kindly consented to sell programmes at both the performances: Miss Esmé Beringer, Miss Vera Beringer, Miss Enid Spencer Brunton, Miss Mabel Berry, Miss Fay Davis, Miss Hettie Dene, Miss Vane Featherston, Miss Gwendolen Floyd, Miss Lily Hanbury, Miss Hilda Hanbury, Miss Evelyn Millard, Miss Decima Moore, Miss Eva Moore, Miss Mona Oram, Miss Kate Seymour, Miss Emily Brinsley Sheridan, Miss Minnie Terry, Miss Doris Templeton.

The Costumes have been gratuitously supplied by HARRISONS, LTD., and MESSRS. L. and H. NATHAN. The wigs by MR. FOX and MR. CLARKSON.

To be followed by the last Three Acts of

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

By RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

Sir Peter Teazle	.	.	.	MR. WILLIAM FARREN.
Charles Surface	.	.	.	MR. CHARLES WYNDHAM.
Joseph Surface	.	.	.	MR. FORBES ROBERTSON.
Sir Oliver Surface	.	.	.	MR. H. H. VINCENT.
Sir Benjamin Backbite	.	.	.	MR. CYRIL MAUDE.
Careless	.	.	.	MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER.
Sir Harry Bumper (with song)	.	.	.	MR. WILLIAM TERRISS.
Crabtree	.	.	.	MR. TOM THORNE.
Moses	.	.	.	MR. EDWARD RIGHTON.
Snake	.	.	.	MR. WEEDON GROSSMITH.
Trip	.	.	.	MR. FREDERICK KERR.
Sir Toby	.	.	.	MR. ARTHUR BOURCHIER.
Old Rowley	.	.	.	MR. HERMANN VEZIN.
Joseph's Servant	.	.	.	MR. EDMUND MAURICE.
Charles' Servants	.	.	.	{ MR. G. FARQUHAR. MR. C. P. LITTLE.
Mrs. Candour	.	.	.	MISS ROSE LECLERCQ.
Lady Sneerwell	.	.	.	MISS JESSIE MILWARD.
Maria	.	.	.	MISS MARY MOORE.
Maid	.	.	.	MISS ELLALINE TERRIS.
Lady Teazle	.	.	.	MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL.

Charles Surface's Guests.—MESSRS. LEWIS WALLER, GEORGE GIDDENS, ARTHUR PLAYFAIR, YORKE STEPHENS, SYDNEY BROUGH, BERNARD GOULD, FRANK FENTON, MURRAY CARSON, J. L. MACKAY, ALLAN AYNESWORTH, D. S. JAMES.

Act III., Scene I. Room at Sir Peter Teazle's.

Scenes 2 and 3. At Charles Surface's.

Acts IV. and V. Joseph Surface's Study.

Hon. Acting Managers.—MESSRS. FREDERICK HARRISON, H. H. MORELL, FITZROY GARDINER, R. V. SHONE, W. H. GRIFFITHS, NEIL FORSYTH, HORACE WATSON, J. HURST, and E. HARVEY.

Hon. Stage Managers.—MESSRS. EDWARD HASTINGS, ROBERT SOUTAR, IAN ROBERTSON, ARTHUR WILLIAMS, HARRY NICHOLLS, CHAS. CATHCART, and H. DE LANGE.

Hon. Musical Director.—MR. CARL AMBRUSTER.

MR. WYNDHAM begs to tender his sincere thanks to the managers and artists who have so kindly co-operated with him on this occasion,

This is the programme of the Criterion performance :—

The performance to commence at 7, with J. T. WILLIAMS' Comedietta,

WHO'S TO WIN HIM?

Cyril Dashwood	.	.	.	.	MR. SEYMOUR HICKS.
Mr. Prattleton Primrose	.	.	.	.	MR. HARRY NICHOLLS.
Squire Brushleigh	.	.	.	.	MR. J. L. SHINE.
Rose	.	.	.	.	MISS KATE RORKE.
Sylvia	.	.	.	.	MISS DOROTHEA BAIRD.
Minuetta	.	.	.	.	MISS ANNIE HUGHES.
Musidora	.	.	.	.	MISS MAUDE MILLETT.
Arabella	.	.	.	.	MISS FAY DAVIS.

After which a scene from

THE HUNCHBACK.

Helen	.	.	.	.	MISS MARION TERRY.
Modus	.	.	.	.	MR. LEONARD BOYNE.

To be followed by T. W. ROBERTSON'S Comedy in Three Acts, entitled

DAVID GARRICK.

David Garrick	.	.	.	.	MR. CHARLES WYNDHAM.
Simon Ingot	.	.	.	.	MR. C. W. SOMERSET.
Squire Chivy	.	.	.	.	MR. E. DAGNALL
				(by special permission of Messrs. Howard and Loftus).	
Smith	.	.	.	.	MR. W. BLAKELEY
				(by special permission of Mr. Arthur Bouchier).	
Brown	.	.	.	.	MR. ALFRED MALTRY.
Jones	.	.	.	.	MR. E. W. GARDINER.
Garrick's Servant	.	.	.	.	MR. J. H. BARNES.
Ingot's Servant	.	.	.	.	MR. KENNETH DOUGLAS.
Mrs. Smith	.	.	.	.	MISS E. VINING.
Miss Araminta Brown	.	.	.	.	MISS EMILY MILLER.
Ada Ingot	.	.	.	.	MISS MARY MOORE.

Acts I. and II. Drawing-room at Simon Ingot's.

Act III. { Scene I. Drawing-room at Simon Ingot's.
 { Scene II. Garrick's Study.

Ladies and gentlemen are requested not to leave their seats between the first and second scenes of the third act, as the curtain will only be down for a minute or two.

Concluding with the Second Act of

THE CRITIC.

By RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

Puff	MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH.
Dangle	MR. C. P. LITTLE.
Sneer	MR. CHARLES CARTWRIGHT.
Don Whiskerandos	MR. E. J. LONNEN.
	(by special permission of Messrs. Howard and Loftus).
Earl of Leicester	MR. EDWARD RIGHTON.
Sir Walter Raleigh	MR. JOHN L. SHINE.
Lord Burleigh	MR. W. BLAKELEY.
Governor of Tilbury Fort	MR. G. W. ANSON.
Master of the Horse	MR. H. DE LANGE.
Sir Christopher Hatton	MR. BRANDON THOMAS
	(by special permission of Mr. A. Chudleigh).
Prompter	MR. EDMONDS.
Sentinels	{ MR. HARRY PAULTON.
	{ MR. ALFRED BISHOP.
Beefeater	MR. TOM THORNE.
Tilburina	MISS FLORENCE ST. JOHN.
First Niece	MISS DECIMA MOORE.
Second Niece	MISS CARLOTTA ADDISON.
Confidante	MISS SOPHIE LARKIN.

Honorary Acting Managers.—MESSRS. FREDERICK HARRISON, H. H. MORELL, FITZROY GARDINER, R. V. SHONE, W. H. GRIFFITHS, NEIL FORSYTH, HORACE WATSON, J. HURST, and E. HARVEY.

Honorary Stage Managers.—MESSRS. EDWARD HASTINGS, ROBERT SOUTAR, IAN ROBERTSON, ARTHUR WILLIAMS, HARRY NICHOLLS, CHAS. CATHCART, and H. DE LANGE.

Honorary Musical Director.—MR. V. HOLLANDER.

Box Office under the management of MR. G. MILLS.

MR. WYNDHAM begs to tender his sincere thanks to the Managers and Artists who have so kindly co-operated with him on this occasion.

But not content with all this, Charles Wyndham and Mrs. Wyndham must needs complete the day by entertaining their friends in the most princely style at the Hotel Cecil.

Concerning this event, let me quote the words of a leading critic, who said: "Let us consider what Charles Wyndham did himself in this extraordinary day of variety and impulse. It was a phenomenal feat, and would tax the strength of the very strongest of his

comrades. About three o'clock in the afternoon he appeared as Charles Surface, in *The School for Scandal*, and played the part with exceptional grace and charm. As everyone observed, he looked a picture, and ought to have been born one hundred years before his time, in order to show the modern youth how to walk, how to move, and how to carry an air of distinction and refinement to the stage. Then followed the presentation of a gold and enamel cigar-box with diamond monogram, subscribed by Charles Wyndham's personal and intimate friends, necessitating a new ceremony. The speech to Charles Wyndham was delivered by Mr. J. Comyns Carr with admirable taste, discretion, and tact. Charles Wyndham's reply was very earnest, very sincere, very heartfelt, and all who were assembled at the Lyceum wondered how any man could stand a further tax on his nervous organisation. But Charles Wyndham was equal to the occasion. Having skimmed the cream of *The School for Scandal*, he proceeded at nightfall to play David Garrick with an intensity, an earnestness, and a power that astonished his admirers. Think of it! Charles Surface and an earnest speech full of feeling in the morning, David Garrick and another speech at night; and after that a banquet at the Hotel Cecil, suggestive of more congratulations and many more speeches! It was a ceremony that would have tried the nerves and energy of the strongest man living, but Charles Wyndham was equal to the occasion. He was never better in his life than as Charles Surface; he never spoke with such grace and charm as when he faced Mr. Comyns Carr,

and after all the exhaustion and excitement it may be doubted if he ever played David Garrick so successfully."

It would be pleasant for me to dwell on that memorable evening at the Hotel Cecil, on the unbounded hospitality of the host and hostess, on the eloquent speech in which the Lord Chief Justice of England (the deeply regretted Lord Russell of Killowen) proposed the toast of the hero of the evening, and on the feeling and equally eloquent way in which it was answered. But land is in sight, and I must shorten sail.

The Lyceum performance was graced by the presence of the late Duchess of Teck, and H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (now King Edward VII.) was at the Criterion Theatre in the evening. As a result of the entertainments the handsome sum of £2,452 6s. 4d. (the actor-manager paying all the expenses himself) was generously handed over to the Actors' Benevolent Fund.

I have often thought that I should like to sum up the total of the amounts that Charles Wyndham has from time to time bestowed upon charities, but it would be a hopeless task, as he would be the last person to help me in the matter.

In connection with this famous May-day celebration I must reproduce two addresses presented to Charles Wyndham, the one by the representatives of the Actors' Benevolent Fund, and the other by the profession generally.

On May 16th, 1896, Charles Wyndham appeared in one of the most charming of all his admirable productions—*Rosemary*, by Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson. The portrait of Sir Jasper Thorndyke proved a worthy

pendant to David Garrick, and it is another of those characters that he can go on playing as long as he pleases. The pretty comedy is so fresh in the public memory, and will so certainly be often seen again, that little need be said about it now. Its charm will never be forgotten by those who have seen, and will see it.

The Jest, by the same authors, that after a considerable lapse of time succeeded it, was a sign that this never-tiring actor, having conquered the realms of high comedy, had resolved to rule in the realms of romance.

And here let it be carefully noted that the special feature that has characterised the career of the zealous Criterion manager is its kaleidoscopic variety. From the breezy merriment of *The Great Divorce Case* to the quiescent poetry, culminating in tragedy, of *The Jest*, is a far cry, and as one glances through all the intermediate stages, between farcical comedy and the pathos of calamity, and thinks that out of the twenty-four years of his government of the little Piccadilly playhouse the *first eight only* were devoted to farce, one wonders why the Criterion is still thought by some to be the home of the mere laughter-lover. After all, the reason is not far to seek. By playing farce as probably no other man has ever played it, that is to say, with as much earnestness and care as if he were acting tragedy, Charles Wyndham stamped his theatre with a hall-mark that will never be effaced. The same ease and grace of manner, the same faultless elocution, the same sincerity of purpose and minute attention to detail that we find in his graver work of to-day, elevated farcical comedy into the realms of art. But we are very apt to forget

that there were only eight years of Criterion farce, as against fifteen devoted to more serious plays !

In Mr. Haddon Chambers' clever comedy, *The Tryanny of Tears*, he gave us an appetising taste of his old quality, but on his farewell night at the Criterion he returned to his sweet *Rosemary*, its Shakespearean motto—"That's for remembrance"—affording a suitable text for the evening. It was a delightful performance. Miss Mary Moore was fascinating as ever in her early Victorian curls and gowns ; Alfred Bishop and Miss Carlotta Addison were perfect pictures, as well as perfect character studies, as Captain and Mrs. Cruickshank ; and, in other parts, J. H. Barnes, James Welch, Kenneth Douglas, Miss Emily Vining, and Miss Annie Hughes shared in the acting honours. Of what Charles Wyndham said and what he did on that interesting evening record is made in another chapter.

CHAPTER XI

WYNDHAM'S THEATRE

ON November 16th, 1899, Charles Wyndham opened the handsome new playhouse in the Charing Cross Road to which he gave his own name. No doubt he regretted leaving the little Criterion Theatre of many happy memories, but with important undertakings in view he must have felt the need of a larger home.

Concerning his first night in it I cannot do better than quote a critic, who said :—

“Charles Wyndham has opened his new theatre in Charing Cross Road in characteristic fashion. The whole of the proceedings of the first night were devoted to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families' Association. Mr. Wyndham has himself been a fighting man. He served first as surgeon and subsequently in the ranks during the American War, and the cause for which he played last night must have appealed deeply to him personally.

“But the public will remember that the farewell performance at the Criterion Theatre in July last was also distinguished by the same spirit of generosity. Then nearly £1,500 were handed over to the Prince of Wales's Hospital Fund.

“Quite apart from this characteristic liberality, the occasion of the opening of Wyndham’s Theatre would have been a memorable one. No actor at the present time occupies a higher position in the esteem and affection of all classes than he whose name has been bestowed on London’s newest playhouse—a playhouse which, we trust, will witness new triumphs, no less brilliant than those which in the past have made the Criterion a household word. Mr. Wyndham chose to make his bow on his new stage in the guise of our old friend David Garrick, but playgoers will eagerly look forward to their favourite figuring in new characters.

“The commencement of any fresh enterprise must always be fraught with some anxiety, but perhaps no man has ever had cause for less than Mr. Wyndham. ‘If I have found the road to your heart, if I still live there,’ he said, addressing his audience in his farewell speech on the Criterion stage, ‘it can matter little what house I occupy on that road. Twenty-three years of devoted service to you I ask to be credited to my account.’ British playgoers are not unmindful of their duties. Repayment will be made in full, and Wyndham’s Theatre will at once attain to the highest eminence of popularity. Good luck, good health, and long days attend on Charles Wyndham !”

The year 1900 was a very busy one with Charles Wyndham, but in the midst of his preparations for the most ambitious dramatic undertaking of his career he found time for other things, as witness the following letters :—



Photo by Alfred Ellis and Walery, 51, Baker Street, W.

MISS MARY MOORE IN "ROSEMARY"

Facing page 284

"SENIOR ACTOR-MANAGER.

"To the Editor of the 'Daily Telegraph.'

"SIR,—Your reference to myself, together with such distinction, at once pleasant and melancholy, as appertains to the position of senior actor-manager of London, excuses my intrusion on your space. You state that my old friend Hare began management in 1875 and I in 1876; consequently that 'I have lost the race by the distance of a single lap.' I am not a sportsman, but, to change the metaphor from pedestrianism to turf, surely it is not true that a horse can fall out of one race, and then, by running in the next, be declared to have won the first? The question of continuous management cannot be overlooked. If it is, where shall we get to? We must really speak by the card, or chronology will undo us. Since 1876 I have been in continuous management. Mr. Hare has been free from the cares of management for two or three years since he began, once when he retired from the St. James's, and once when he gave up the Garrick. Some of the papers have been recently discussing who is really the senior, and have lately decided that I have that honour. If 'date' merely governs the matter, it will be neither Irving nor Hare nor Wyndham. As a matter of 'date,' I took up the reins of management for a short term in the summer of 1868 at the Princess's Theatre, whose manager, by-the-by, G. Vining, prudentially stipulated the prepayment into his hands of every possible expense each fortnight. There was only one. I produced *Nobody's Child*, and felt very like one two weeks after. That noble effort, however, does not count, for Bancroft

began in '65. Nor can he by 'date' assume any dignity. There is happily amongst us still a gentleman who was an actor-manager for some years before that again—Mr. Joseph Cave. My memory goes no further back than that ; but if mere 'date' is everything, possibly there is living another actor-manager who precedes even him. Mr. Hare managed, I fancy, in all twenty-two years, Sir Henry Irving twenty-one, Sir Squire Bancroft twenty, and in two months' time will be recorded the twenty-fourth year of service by your obedient servant,

“CHARLES WYNDHAM.

“WYNDHAM'S THEATRE, CHARING CROSS ROAD,

“February 10th, 1900.”

To England the year 1900 was a very painful one, for it witnessed much of the bitter period of our war with South Africa. As fond of soldiers as poor T. W. Robertson, he wrote this :—

“A PARALLEL.

“*To the Editor of the 'Daily Telegraph.'*”

“SIR,—I suppose it is presumption for an actor to express an opinion on politics or military affairs, however much his heart may throb and yearn for the victory of his countrymen. Some sapient detractors say so, therefore I never do. I have, however, just read your correspondent's letter, headed 'Mr. Kruger and his Burghers,' and regard at first blush with great complacency the experiences of the Boer therein reported. It is gratifying to read that 'our guns did such terrible damage to the Boer entrenchments and sconces—rockets and earth flying up into the air, and rolling down with deadly effect on his countrymen—together with the

havoc caused by the lyddite shells, the fumes of which suffocated his friends.' Above all, it was gratifying to read that the British to him were such surprisingly great experts at shooting that his eyes were opened. Finally, the fact that 2,000 horses have been placed *hors de combat* must be a help to us. Still, there is a wealth of wisdom in the American admonition, 'Go slow.' I am reminded of an incident in my own insignificant career, which makes me pause in my rejoicing. It was during the American Civil War, when for a part of that time I was attached in a very humble capacity to a force organised for the invasion of Texas, that land of milk and honey and horses, all most desirable luxuries to soldiers, never too generously sustained ; and who ultimately in this case were reduced to stone-like biscuits. They were stamped 'B. C.,' and so hard were they that the soldiers irreverently declared that they were thus marked because they must have been baked before the days of Pontius Pilate, but that is a digression. Well, we had several skirmishes, as the army advanced through forests and across plains, and we were always capturing prisoners and welcoming deserters. The story they all told us was that our triumph was assured, for alas ! the force against us was so insignificant, the troops so dissatisfied, the supplies so scanty, etc. Well, on we went, and at the end of three weeks came the battle of the campaign, when the insignificant force against us suddenly, and at their own time, turned round, and by dint of strong arguments persuaded us to return and leave our goods behind us. I remember this latter fact painfully still, because I had ordered a brand-new uniform to wear when entering

captured cities. I was told it was the proper thing to do, and I was young. I saw that uniform when it came from the New Orleans tailor, and I have never seen it since. We had two or three weeks' hard retreat after that battle, with devils behind us, at the side of us—and sometimes ahead of us! It was a trying time, but the most unpleasant experience was the night after this decisive battle, when, pressed all of us into a narrow road, we were hurrying back helter-skelter, with the enemy's guns behind us. 'Make way, make way!' shouted the ambulance drivers, as they galloped past us with their cargoes of helpless wounded; as if those agonised shrieks of the poor stricken fellows, tossed about on those springless vehicles, on that ill-made rutty road, did not teach us how to sympathise. It may have been that, weakened by a previous thirty hours' fast and vigil, my scepticism proportionately strengthened, but I do remember that during that uncomfortable night's march I began to wonder whether those prisoners and deserters had been let loose on us purposely to lead us into that fools' paradise. Now, when I read all your stories from slim Boer prisoners and deserters, of damage, shortness of supplies, and State disaffection, I begin to wonder once again.

"Your obedient servant,

"CHARLES WYNDHAM.

"WYNDHAM'S THEATRE, *February 13th.*"

At this time everyone was talking of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Not only in France, but in England, Coquelin and Sarah Bernhardt had made Edmond Rostand's beautifully written play famous, and, to tell the truth, a

great number of English people who only half understood it were raving about it. Amongst theatrical gossips the great question was, Who was going to write an English version of this noble work—who was going to be the English Cyrano ?

In due course it was announced that Stuart Ogilvie and Louis N. Parker had adapted the great play for Charles Wyndham, and that this intrepid actor had resolved to grapple with the most difficult task that had fallen in the way of a modern actor.

To show the danger of the undertaking on English boards, in the English tongue, it is only necessary to glance at the two principal characters.

They have been thus described :—

“Cyrano de Bergerac, whose ugly nose embittered his whole life, was a very real and very living personage,—author, poet, and swashbuckler ; a lofty soul in a rugged shell, fighting equally readily with his sword against oppression and bullies, as with his pen and his ready tongue against shams and hypocrisies. The only cause he never defended was his own. Too doubtful of his own merits, he let another win the woman he loved ; and his poetical imaginings were annexed in his own time, and after his death, by authors ever in search, then as now, of other people's original ideas. His romance, *The Voyage to the Moon*, of which such excellent use is made in the third act of M. Rostand's play, was imitated by Swift, and, unconsciously no doubt, by every writer of modern journeys. Molière condescended to transfer a whole scene of one of Cyrano's comedies bodily into one of his own, and the world has gone on shaking its sides at Cyrano's wit under Molière's name.

“Roxane, the heroine of the play, belonged to the *Precieuses* or *Exquisites*, whose high-flown sentiments were satirised by Molière in his *Precieuses Ridicules*. They dabbled in mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy. All that was natural was despised. The names given at their birth were too commonplace, so they exchanged them for others; thus ‘Madeline Robin’ became ‘Roxane.’ Their conversation consisted for the most part of the fantastic. Everything had to be embroidered in a very filigree of verbiage.

“As for the Cadets of Gascony—those wild, cheery, reckless, irresponsible beings—they formed such a contrast to the *Precieuses* that it almost seemed that they were following unwittingly the laws of nature, and were restoring the balance.”

This is a description of Cyrano given, before his entrance in the first act, by one of the characters :—

“A whirlwind fencer, a poet, swashbuckler, musician, and weird withal; whimsical, wild, grotesque, but, a devil with his sword. Mark with what fierce disdain he wears his cloak, and cocks it up behind him with that sword like the defiant curve of a bantam’s tail; while above a mighty ruff of Punch’s cut he proudly airs his nose, and by God’s grace, my masters, what a nose is this same nose! When first you see that monstrous snout, you cry, ‘No, no, this is too good a jest.’ Then, with a smile, you add, ‘He will take it off anon,’ but Monseigneur de Bergerac never takes it off.”

Now could there be anything so opposed to English ideas as this? In our country (I have often wondered

why) it is customary to think of a big nose (in itself a misfortune)—in connection with a comic character. Mr. Punch has a big nose, and that reprehensible old gentleman, Mr. Ally Sloper, owes much of his popularity to his unsightly proboscis. It seemed impossible that the great mass of the British public who would trouble themselves little about Rostand, Coquelin, or Bernhardt, could be taught to associate such a disfigurement with one who ought to figure in their eyes as a veritable hero of romance. Again, it would be against their nature to care for a heroine who declined to respond to such a gallant lover because of a personal affliction. Take away sympathy from hero and heroine, and what chance is there for a play with the great majority of playgoers, however beautiful its conception, however poetical its development, may be?

Before appearing in it in London, Charles Wyndham produced *Cyrano de Bergerac* in the provinces.¹ In Birmingham I carefully noted the tone of a packed and deeply attentive audience. The perfection of his acting (and there is no other word for it) elicited torrents of applause, but the comments were all alike. Why did Roxane (Miss Mary Moore seemed to aggravate her selfishness by looking so sweet in the character) behave so coldly to such a noble suitor? and why, oh, why, did their beloved Charles Wyndham, the ideal David Garrick

¹ It was during his visit to Dublin that a state performance of "Cyrano" was called for and given, amidst a scene of extraordinary enthusiasm, before an audience that included the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the Lord Lieutenant and Countess Cadogan, and the members of the Viceregal Court.

of their dreams, destroy his ever-welcome appearance with that hideous nose ?

The play, which was superbly staged, was very cordially received in London, but it was not long-lived. It was impossible that in this country it should be so. But the effort was a heroic one, and Charles Wyndham has every reason to feel proud of it. In some ways it ranks as one of the greatest of his acting achievements. June 1st, 1900, witnessed its final performance, and on that occasion he said : "Ladies and gentlemen, let me, in the name of all of us, thank you for your generous enthusiasm to-night. I will not disguise from myself the significance thereof—that we recognise, as we do, with some degree of sadness, the fact that this is the last night of "Cyrano" for the present. He has met with a peculiar reception, and opinions have been divided—numbers like the play, numbers do not. To the former I extend my congratulations, to the latter my sympathies. Both have reason on their side, according to their respective opinions. I may tell you, in response to your kind reception, that the play has not only had a divided opinion about it, but a divided result. For weeks, notwithstanding the very heavy expenses which you will understand have been attached to this production, the result has been a very gratifying profit till, at the very moment when I expected that what we in our profession call a boom had arrived, there came a slump. Oddly enough, it came after the night we received the news of the relief of Mafeking. It is very difficult for managers to find a reason for what occurs in their experience, but all that I can think of is that the time

was too exciting, the people were too full of emotion, and, I am sorry to say, too full in many quarters with sadness for so sad a play to live in the hearts of all. I recognise this fact, and therefore withdraw the play for a time, looking forward, with pleasure, I hope, on your side as well as on ours, to reproducing it. With your kind acceptance of that prospect I do not think I can do better than close my remarks by repeating what I have already said—to those who like the piece I extend my congratulations, and to those who do not, my sympathy.”

Possibly it was a disappointment, but, if so, from an artistic point of view it was well worth its cost.

On October 9th Charles Wyndham produced *Mrs. Dane's Defence*, by Henry Arthur Jones, an admirable piece of stagecraft, with a fine part for the actor; but, owing to its subject, not likely to become so universally popular as some of its clever author's other works.

At this time the Criterion Theatre was being managed (in partnership with Charles Wyndham) by Arthur Bouchier, and while R. C. Carton's comedy, *Lady Huntworth's Experiment*, was experiencing its successful run the following amusing little incident took place. It will be remembered that Lady Huntworth's adventure was to go out as a cook, and that all the gentlemen of the household in which she secured an engagement, quite believing her to be a domestic servant, fell deeply in love with her.

One evening during the run of this play, when a revival of *David Garrick* was going on at Wyndham's Theatre, Charles Wyndham had a letter from a well-

known Canon, speaking in the very highest terms of the performance the latter had just witnessed, and saying that if more actors followed his good example in the choice of their plays, there would not be so much said of the evil influence of the stage on public morals ; but, on the other hand, the stage would become an influence for good, as far-reaching as the Church, the actor preaching quite as good a sermon as the clergyman, etc., etc.

Charles Wyndham sent this letter round to Arthur Bouchier with a letter to the effect that he hoped it would be a lesson to him not to act naughty plays in which clergymen fell in love with their cooks, but to try and reform, and follow his good example, so that in time he, too, might get a letter of praise from the Church.

Arthur Bouchier wrote back to the messenger saying that that Canon's letter of praise was no news to him—he knew all about it beforehand, and was consulted before it was written, and Charles Wyndham was chosen because that worthy wily Canon had a daughter going on the stage. He had asked Bouchier which was the best actor-manager with whom to confide her, and Bouchier had said, “‘There is Irving, Tree, George Alexander, and Wyndham. Now I think you could not do better than to send her to Wyndham, as he is always very impressible, and I know he would do anything in his power to promote the young lady's interests—if she is nice. Write him a letter in praise of his acting and management ; pile it on—he is very susceptible to flattery, like the rest of us.’ So Wyndham got the letter ? He will hear about the daughter in a

day or two. Mr. Bouchier is most anxious to know the sequence of events."

Not to be outdone, Charles Wyndham wrote back in reply to this: "No doubt the Canon has a daughter going on the stage, and no doubt she is nice, which would be half her reason for wishing to go on the stage; but before allowing her to do so her reverend father has, first of all, made the most careful inquiries to find out if the stage is as black as it is painted. He has even been to a theatre! Wyndham's. Has seen *David Garrick*, and from a spiritual and moral point of view, considers the influence of the stage as good as that of the Church, and that Wyndham must certainly be an extremely nice man to act such a very nice piece—with such nice pathos—everything nice, sugar and spice. So the letter *was* written, not to Bouchier, who would have given anything to have it—but to *Wyndham*."

The only novelty of 1901 was *The Mummy and the Humming Bird*, by Isaac Henderson. The year 1902 contained a red-letter day not only in the career of Charles Wyndham, but in the history of the English stage. When our good King Edward VII. was crowned it was found that amongst the Coronation honours the name of our gifted and indefatigable actor-manager was included.

Of course, his friends and admirers were delighted, and, indeed, nothing could be more satisfactory. Sir Henry Irving was deservedly the recipient of the first actor's accolade, because he is not only the greatest living representative of Shakespearean characters, but by the beauty of his Lyceum productions has done so much to

make our great national poet understood and revered. On the other hand, Sir Charles Wyndham is undoubtedly the finest English comedian of our age.

How popular the honour conferred upon him was with the members of his own profession will be proved by the following little incident. At the time the musical comedy, *The Country Girl*, was running at Daly's Theatre, and to the great delight of the audience Mr. Rutland Barrington adroitly dropped these lines into his "topical" song :—

"When we read in the list that's as long as our fist
All the titles that mark an occasion,
It's a sign of the age, that a man on the stage
Has successfully made an invasion.
And no matter the rôles—far apart as the poles
There was nothing this actor could frighten,
He is Garrick to-day, but he first made his way
To our hearts as Bob Sackett in *Brighton*.

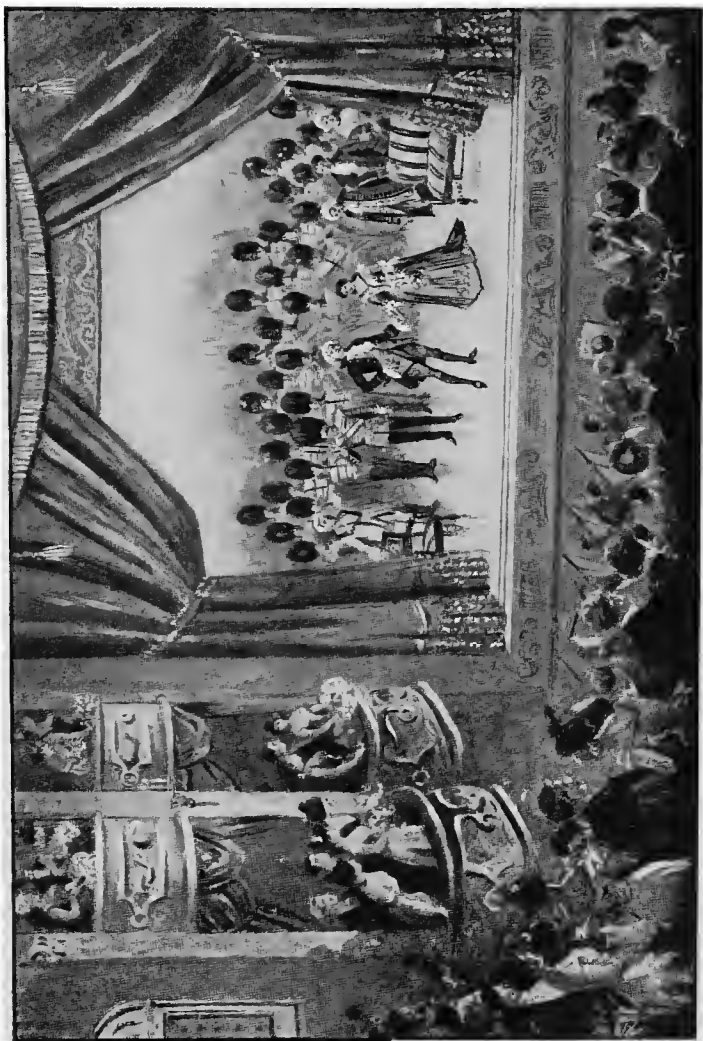
"Piece—many a piece—he's played in his management long,
And, in fact, such a lot that a Knighthood he's got
For amusing the natives of Bhong.

And he'll make a great stir in his new part of 'Sir,'
Will the popular Wyndham of Bhong."¹

They were received with acclamation.

On May 12th, 1903, Charles Wyndham introduced another author to the London stage, and with the greatest success produced Hubert Henry Davies's comedy, *Mrs. Gorringer's Neck ace*. It cannot be said that the play contained a very striking part for him, but in a comedy character Miss Mary Moore acted with consummate charm.

¹ A fictitious place belonging to the play.



By permission of the proprietors of the "Graphic"

OPENING NIGHT AT WYNDHAM'S THEATRE—"DAVID GARRICK,"

FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOLDIERS' WIDOWS, AND ORPHANS

The National Anthem by the Guards' band as the curtain is falling

CHAPTER XII

THE NEW THEATRE

ON March 12th, 1903, before the production of *Mrs. Gorrings's Necklace* at Wyndham's Theatre, Sir Charles, ever anxious to climb higher and higher, had opened his beautiful New Theatre in St. Martin's Lane. For an initial attraction he revived the ever-fragrant *Rosemary*, and once more the pretty play was received with enthusiasm. As Sir Jasper Thorndyke and Dorothy Cruickshank, he and Miss Mary Moore were again seen at their best ; Alfred Bishop was as admirable as ever as Captain Cruickshank, R.N., a character that might have stepped out of the pages of Smollett, and J. H. Barnes was once more excellent as Professor Jogram. All the other characters were in good hands, Harry Paulton, for example, succeeding James Welch as the weather-beaten post-boy, George Minifie. It was found that the piece had lost none of its old charm, and it was surprising to think that seven years had elapsed since its first production. It is said that modern plays quickly fade and become hopelessly old-fashioned, but Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson's *Rosemary* has justified its title and proved itself an evergreen.

At the fall of the last curtain, Sir Charles Wyndham

spoke as follows: "In me you see an erring and extravagant spirit. Don't misunderstand me—I mean nothing more than Hamlet meant when he described his uncle's ghost. Like that mysterious being, I seem to be a wanderer by night. I have wandered from the Criterion Theatre to Wyndham's, and again from Wyndham's here. Once more I appear before you in a dual rôle. As an actor in the character of your old friend Sir Jasper Thorndyke; as a man in the character of another old friend of yours, the sturdy beggar. Three and a half years ago, when the curtain was rising on the first performance at Wyndham's, the curtain was also rising on the grim South African tragedy in the theatre of war. On that occasion I appealed to you on behalf of the families of the rank and file of the army. Your response was as magnificent as were the services that subsequently earned it. Now, when the gates of Janus have swung to on their ponderous hinges, when the peacemaker is abroad, and the dogs of war are muzzled, I have appealed to you on behalf of those whose birth and breeding forbid them to cry out in the marketplace, and whose dignity enforces silent suffering. How great that suffering has been, and is, we know from those best qualified to speak, except the sufferers themselves. For the officers' families have I now appealed, and again your generous hearts have opened. In their name and my own I tender you most grateful thanks."

By this performance the sum of nearly £1,500 was realised.

With this "Rosemary for Remembrance" I shall bid good-bye to Sir Charles at his New Theatre. Of course,

it has witnessed the production of new plays and the revival of old ones, but they are so fresh in the public memory that they require no record in these pages.

I know that this is the briefest of brief chapters, and hardly worthy of such a designation, and yet the scheme of my book would be incomplete unless I gave the New Theatre a niche of its own.

Playgoers recognise in it a house replete with comfort and taste, and yet rumour has it that Sir Charles has something even more elaborate in store for them.

CHAPTER XIII

"THE PICTURE OF THE MIND"

AN old proverb tells us that "Speech is the picture of the mind," and this volume would certainly be incomplete without some account of Charles Wyndham's many happy speeches, showing as they do the generous, warm-hearted, earnest character of the man. It is generally acknowledged that, whether it be at public meetings or social gatherings, he, as a speaker, is without a rival. Fluent and clear, happy in facial play, and the very slight amount of gesture in which he indulges, he can always keep an audience not only deeply interested, but thoroughly entertained. It is a great gift, and I doubt if he knows he possesses it. Certainly I have never heard him acknowledge it, and I know that he keeps no record of his achievements. It seems all the more important, then, that some of them should, in necessarily brief form, be preserved by one who appreciates them.

Another old proverb sagely informs us that "Many speak much who cannot speak well." Exactly the reverse may be said in the case of Charles Wyndham. He speaks often, but he always speaks well.

This, I think, the following extracts will amply prove.

On February 12th, 1897, addressing the members of the Playgoers' Club, he said :—

"You will readily understand how proud and grateful I feel at having earned so much of your goodwill as to be invited here to-night as an approved representative of the drama, and to have the pleasing duty, as its ambassador, of returning thanks for the honour you have conferred. At the same time, some of you may remember that, on a very recent occasion, I was deputed at another gathering to respond for the same toast, and my pride and gratification are not unalloyed with perplexity when I find myself so soon responding again. On the last occasion I was supposed to be addressing the players ; to-night I have the honour to stand before the playgoers, so I must use another argument. None the less is my task a pleasant one. The very name of 'playgoer' is music to the ear of the player. What the valetudinarian is to the doctor, the litigant to the lawyer, is the man who spends his evening seeing plays to the man who spends his in introducing them. What if you are reputed to be sometimes too severe in your judgment, *plus Royaliste que le Roi*, more critical than a critic ? What if your individual opinions be as wide asunder as the poles, or your brains as various as the hats that cover them ? What if flabby Philistinism sleeps beneath the billycock hat of one playgoer, and sturdy independence beneath the white hat of another ? What if the one infuriated the distinguished dramatist, and the other excited the harmless necessary manager ?¹ What if once

¹ This is in reference to the first night of *The Headless Man*, when a vulgar "booster," who wore a white hat, provoked Charles Wyndham beyond endurance.

the white hat served as the red flag? Shall it therefore be crushed, or the spirit of freedom it symbolises? No. Eight years ago the wearer of the white hat waved it in my face as a flag of liberty. He was within his rights. To-night, I am told, he waves it as a flag of truce. I accept, and never again, in my eyes, shall it be anything but a flag of peace. But, gentlemen, whether you are white-hatted, black-hatted, or no-hatted, the fact remains that you are playgoers, not play-abstainers. That is your position, and no man in mine can ask for more. Now I approach a difficulty. You ask me to speak for the drama—in fact, you ask me to advocate that which needs no advocacy. As an institution it is coeval with civilisation; as an instinct it is part of human nature itself. No period in the history of the human race, no spot on the inhabited globe, can be discovered without the drama in some form or other. It influences our childish tastes, it nerves and strengthens our manhood, and it soothes our declining years. Its power and its influence have at last lifted it to its proper place. It has risen beyond the need of argument. To attempt to speak of it now would be as presumptuous as try to hold a brief for humanity. Let us rather discuss its humble ministers on my side of the curtain, or its faithful votaries on yours. I prefer to speak of you. What are you? You are an organisation standing midway between the sometimes crude, but always generous public verdict, and a stereotyped formula of expert criticism. Your object, I take it, is to go to the theatre as earnest inquirers, neither in the spirit of the idolater nor of the iconoclast; your ambition to regulate the

undisciplined ardour of the one and thaw the glacial scepticism of the other. 'Praise, praise, and nothing but praise,' cried out to you the other day a distinguished dramatist;¹ but he should have modified his claim. Everything depends upon the nature and quality of the praise. Deadly, I admit, is the spirit which denies. Thence comes the atrophy of art. None the less deadly is the anodyne of the spirit which affirms too readily; which sees without seeing; approves without proving; and falls down before the Golden Calf which King Demos has set up. But still lean always towards praise, for it encourages; give us as much of it as you conscientiously can. I know that Hamlet, in telling us to beware of grieving the judicious, advises us to reject the laugh of the unskillful. But what did Hamlet know about it? Hamlet! Hamlet, an amateur, the very prototype of amateurs, for he presumed, as amateurs sometimes will, to teach us professionals. A novice who, after experimenting upon his friends, as all amateurs do, grew so infatuated with their interested praise that he actually began to calculate what he would be worth as a professional. 'Would not this,' he asks his friend Horatio, 'get me a fellowship in a cry of players?' and a candid friend answers, 'Half a share.' And then this amateur, like most amateurs, puts his own estimate on his services, and cries, 'A whole!' Hamlet! who always took the centre of the stage, and then talked about 'making the judicious grieve.' Why, such was that man's impudence, that had he really gone upon the stage, he would in a month have been an actor-manager!

¹ A. W. Pinero,

Think of it, Alexander ! Think of it, Hawtrey ! Think of it, every absent actor-manager ! He would have belonged undeservedly to that charming fraternity which, in its individual and collective capacity, stands the embodiment of sweetness, meekness, humility, and self-effacement ! Do not laugh at me, gentlemen. For Heaven's sake, let us be serious over this. In the whole course of my vast experience—and I have been a manager longer than any English actor alive—I never knew an actor-manager without those attributes dominating every moment of his life. I think I observe a note of derision in your response. Suppress it. Give your courteous ear to my earnest tribute. No words can depict the actor-manager more faithfully than those of the poet, gentlemen, who knows him so well, and says of him—

“ ‘ He asks not for honour, wealth, or fame, not he ;
All these him pass, and by him pass unlamented.
Give him the moon, and he'll rest contented.’

“ Yes, gentlemen, the moon. That is all the actor-manager wants. And shall Hamlet, who wanted so much that he went through five acts dissatisfied with everything—shall he presume to tell us to be satisfied only with the praise of what he thinks the judicious ? Shakespeare did not tell you what answer we gave him. I will. ‘ The praise of the judicious, by all means ; but we want as much of the other as we can honourably get.’ Yes, it is a conjunction we want ; a conjunction of cool head and warm heart, and that is what you can get us. I repudiate Hamlet's influence. I want yours. Do you remember what Niebuhr, the historian, said to

his pupils? 'You are my wings,' by which he meant that their sympathy, their love, their constant devotion sustained him. You and such as you, who leaven the public taste by cultivated intelligence, are our wings to-day. Need I say more to show you that your responsibilities are as serious as ours? In taking leave of his readers at the close of his *French Revolution*, Carlyle uses these words: 'To thee I was but a voice, yet was our relationship a kind of sacred one. Doubt it not. Ill stands it with me if I have spoken falsely; thine it is to hear truly.' Every word of this fine passage applies to you and to us. Ill stands it with me if we have 'presented falsely'; 'thine it is to hear truly.'

"Remember, the actor, if misappreciated here and now, has no appeal to a higher tribunal. Your judgment is final. Be sure it is just and merciful. The actor cannot, like Bacon, proudly appeal from contemporary neglect to the verdict of future ages and distant lands. No. He must be his own monument. He can have no other. He must be enshrined, if enshrined at all, in hearts as perishable as his own.

"In your lives some of you, I daresay, have known some Darby and Joan who have loved and grown old together, who perhaps in the past were by the world neglected, misunderstood, and were thrown back upon each other for mutual devotion. You have noticed how closely, how touchingly their lives were intertwined the one with the other; how, heart in heart, they lived for each other; and you feel that any gust of calamity which extinguishes the one flame must put

glamour of the footlights, nor was it built up only on his artistic presentments. His own personality must be taken into account. What he was before the public he was to his friends in private. Every heroic deed of his upon the stage was just such as we could imagine him performing off the boards—nay, as on more than one occasion he did perform. It is impossible to conceive a grander parallel between the artist and the man. He lived a life as worthy and died a death as tragic as any man he had represented on the stage. But we must not dwell too long on mournful memories. When the soldier escorts his dead comrade to the grave he plays the funeral march, but when he turns his face back to life's work and battle he plays the most inspiring music at his command. So it is our part with head erect to face the storm and stress of life, emulating the merits, not vainly lamenting the loss of our departed friend. We must remember with satisfaction that the boat which this house will cover will, whenever she goes forth on her noble mission, immortalise the name and vitalise the spirit of William Terriss far more effectively than a mere appeal to the passer-by set in stately phrases and sculptured in monumental marble. On her prow should be inscribed those watchwords of his career—Life, Vigour, Courage, and Devotion."

On November 16th, 1899, on the occasion of the opening of Wyndham's Theatre, he was compelled to thank the audience for its enthusiasm, and on the fall of the curtain said that the music of those sweet voices which greeted himself and his company on the last

night at the old theatre vibrated in the memory through the fresher voices of encouragement heard in the new house. For their generous and enthusiastic reception the company had no words at their command, and unfortunate though they might be in that respect, he was much more unfortunate, for he owed much more. On both occasions the public had collaborated with him in an important undertaking. On the last night at the Criterion they helped to lighten the pain and smooth the pillow of many a victim of disease. That night they had assisted to cheer the families and help the homes of those brave fellows whose bayonets had flashed in the African sunlight, but whose lifeless eyes would never look upon sunlight more. On the first occasion they had raised the sum of £1,500. He was happy to state that as the result of the present evening's performance they topped £4,000. A great philosopher once said that two things stirred his soul to the depths—the stars above us and a sense of duty below. With Leonids in the morning and a splendid tribute from that audience in the evening, what a great time that philosopher would have to-day! Duty and home were the main ideas of *David Garrick*—the play they had seen that night. The soldier was nobly fulfilling his duty, and that audience had just as nobly responded to the cause of home—the homes of those brave fellows who were fighting now for ours. With regard to his plan of campaign for the future, he had only to say that he had no plan of campaign at that house. Pledges were as embarrassing to managers as to ministers. Plans depended upon events, and events were uncertain.

He could no more reveal the plan of campaign by which he would reach their hearts than Sir Redvers Buller could reveal the plan by which he would reach Pretoria. All they knew was that he would get there, and in his smaller campaign, by the aid of the public's kind sympathy, he hoped to get there also.

On March 10th, 1899, addressing the members of the Actors' Association, he said :—

“I am rejoiced to be once again with my brethren in art, and to have the privilege of moving the adoption of this Report. It is pleasant—very pleasant—to note the continuing and growing prosperity of our Association. How much all this is due to the indefatigable zeal and energy of our secretary and officers I need not tell you. I cannot resist the opportunity of expressing my own feelings of admiration for their administrative powers and unfailing attention to our interests. In our recent struggle for a certain fund that shall be nameless, for the obvious reason that it has now become absolutely nameless, I came across a letter from one of the aggrieved ones charging us with being a ‘band of theatrical Socialists.’ The expression was intended as a term of opprobrium. I ask you to accept it as a compliment—as a graphic description of our *raison d'être*. It is just what we ought to be—a ‘band of theatrical Socialists,’ for what is the aim of an Association except to be socialistic? ‘Each for all, and all for each,’ that should be our motto; solidarity our guiding principle; the dignity and well-being of our profession as a whole the goal of our endeavours. In this spirit of theatrical

Socialism I commend to those of our brethren who are not yet members the serious advisability of joining and helping us still further to advance our common interests. For there is yet much more to be done. I hope one day to have the honour of proposing another campaign against an injustice still more crying than that from the fight against which we have so victoriously emerged—one that will require greater sacrifices than ever, but which will confer a greater benefit upon the profession. I read in a daily paper yesterday that I should have an important announcement to make to you to-day. My position in connection with this newspaper statement reminds me very much of the story of a certain popular light comedian who, some hundred years ago, was an actor-manager. As an actor he was clever ; as a manager—well, it occurred to him once, when business at his theatre in Bath was very dull, to advertise the appearance of a combination, for one night only, of three most potent dramatic stars. I am sorry to say that, as a matter of fact, he had not engaged one of them. Well, he had his house that night very full—full with an expectant audience who soon began to manifest impatience at a delay, the cause of which must be intelligible to you all. In those days a popular light comedian had many privileges accorded to him by an indulgent public, one of which was being impudent. So our light comedian appeared before the curtain and expressed his great regret that, owing to unavoidable circumstances, the stars announced would not be able to appear, and lifting his finger suddenly in deprecation of any possible storm of indignation, he seriously added, ‘ But, ladies

and gentlemen, I am not oblivious of my promise to provide you with an unique entertainment. I will discharge my obligation. In substitution for the absent stars I have arranged for the orchestra to play 'God save the King.' Now I do not exactly understand how it got to be stated at this early stage I, or anyone, should be qualified to give you any definite news. I was certainly asked the nature of my interview with the Attorney-General on Wednesday, and replied more by a look, perhaps, than by words, that the bulk of that interview was for the present confidential. Further, that if I had anything to say, I should certainly say it to you first, so that, for the present, no newspapers need apply. I did not wish to convey more than that, and indeed, I am afraid I can only meet your expectations by asking you to sing 'God save the Attorney-General.' Seriously, you can easily imagine that this inquiry is a very difficult and delicate one. But Sir Richard Webster is prosecuting it with all his accustomed vigour, tact, and determination to arrive at the real justice and equity of the case. Meanwhile, let us congratulate ourselves on having done our duty. It was on our initiative, and ours alone, that this property has been saved. We had confronting us the opinions of the most eminent legal experts, from Sir John Campbell downwards, all absolutely opposed to our views and contentions. We were conscious that we were fluttering the dovecot of tradition, and arousing angry passions in various quarters. But we persisted and persevered, and now have absolutely and completely triumphed. It shows that in England, at all events, a good cause, a good judge,

good advocacy—and we had all these—mean a good win. I felt from the first, after examination of the subject, that we should win, and I am glad, for the sake of my reputation as a prophet, that I told you you would get your subscriptions back. I am equally glad, for the sake of my reputation as a prophet, that I did not tell you when. But never mind. The bread you cast upon the waters will return before many days—not too many, I hope, but just enough to teach you ‘how poor are those who have no patience.’ There is, however, one part of our conversation that the Attorney-General does permit me to divulge, though, of course, not in any official sense. He asked me whether I thought it would not be possible for the different solid associations to amalgamate into one great institution. Some of you may remember that two years ago, in this theatre, I advocated the same advice in the strongest language at my command. I am convinced that we shall study both our interests and our dignity if we bring all the influence we as a body possess to bear on the accomplishment of such a scheme—to dispense with these constant appeals from different associations—to dispense, indeed, with begging altogether. This is not the moment to discuss the question, but it is one which is eminently for your consideration, whether we cannot ultimately achieve amalgamation and self-imposed taxation. Do not let us forget that our material prosperity has grown simultaneously with public appreciation of us as a body, and when dignity and prosperity can go hand in hand, what difficulty is there that we should not insist on surmounting? Once let us realise this in all

its great significance, and any time, means, and labour of mine to further the cause shall be heartily at your disposal."

On his farewell performance at the Criterion Theatre, in July, 1899, he thus addressed an enthusiastic and distinguished audience :—

"Your Royal Highness, ladies and gentlemen,—What your exuberant generosity means you will better understand when I announce to you that this house, which ordinarily holds only £220, to-night holds no less a sum than £1,474. I thank you sincerely for the compliment you thus pay me. In looking round for the most appropriate channel through which to repay some portion, however small, of the debt of gratitude I owe my public, I have chosen that charity which, in my opinion, and, I believe, in yours, is by its widespread application most closely intertwined with public and private life, 'The Prince of Wales's Hospital Fund.' Here I would like to read you a letter, one among very many I have received, from an old friend and favourite of yours :—

"'Dear Charlie,—Like Paul Pry, I had intended to just drop in at your last night at the Cri. Sorry I am not well enough, but enclose cheque (my mite) for a gallery ticket. Hope I don't intrude. With love, yours, J. L. Toole.'

"And now a word or two about myself. It is a grave moment in the life of a man when he leaves the place which has been his professional home for upwards of twenty-three years. Grave, but not sad. Have we not

seen to-night in *Rosemary* a play dominated by the inspiring thought that remembrance of the past is not so much a source of pain to repine against as a blessing to be thankful for? In this spirit of gratitude will you let me first express my heartfelt acknowledgments to all those who have on this side of the curtain worked with me and for me during the past twenty-three years, right up to to-night? You will readily understand why I place their goodwill even on a par with yours. Though their point of view is different, their approval is of no less moment. You watch the product, they the process; in the combats and rivalries of art it is the direction of your thumb which settles the gladiator's fate, but it is much to that gladiator to know that whether the issue be victory or death, the hearts of his fellows are, and always have been, with him. In this light I shall not be accused, I hope, of invidious selection, if out of the many names that arise to my lips at this moment I single out three whose association with me has extended over the longest period, all more than fourteen years—a mere speck on the span of eternity—but for poor humanity always fourteen solemn years. One of these three has, alas! quitted this stage never to return, my dear old friend Blakeley. How intimately associated he was with the fortunes of the house you know, and you can guess how often of late years, whilst casting a play, I have looked round, so to speak, for Blakeley—and found him not—and how there has been borne in on me the full significance and pathos of those words in the play to-night, 'There was no Hannah.' The next claiming my deepest recognition

is that of a man happily still with us, and in the plenitude and meridian of his powers, George Giddens, whom I first found on a lawyer's office stool, and now find one of London's best comedians, whose name will ever be linked with this theatre, and, I hope, with mine. Lastly, I desire, as you would all expect me to do, to mention the lady who has played at this theatre without a break since the time when, by your favour, *Wild Oats* and *David Garrick* inaugurated that period during which the theatre has achieved and maintained its highest financial prosperity. I refer to my friend and my family's friend ever since she was a little girl—Miss Mary Moore. Not only by the exercise of her delicate art, but in a thousand other ways, of which the public can have no direct knowledge, my fellow-worker's zealous services, keen instinct, and sound judgment have materially contributed to the success of my management. For these and innumerable other reasons, unnamed but unforgotten, sprigs of rosemary will always be treasured in the mental pocket-book I reserve especially for them. Another pocket-book, or rather portmanteau, already bursting with its fragrant burden, I keep for you on your side of the curtain. To my mind you are all much older than you profess yourselves to be, for in looking at your animated faces and sympathetic eyes I see behind them, through my psychological Röntgen rays, not yourselves only, but the audience of twenty-three years ago, and I recall with gratitude how evening after evening your encouragement first advanced and then sustained me. I conjure up the old-fashioned roller curtain of those early days,

rising fraught with destiny on a new play, and at its close the roller striking these boards with what seemed to my anxious fancy to be either the sharp rap of approbation or the dull thud of defeat. Thanks to you, there never was defeat. Your untiring sympathy, lavishly given—most lavishly when most needed—drove failure out of the house. You know how they say that every evening in Old Egypt the rays of the sun had power to awake fugitive music from lips of stone; so every evening had the sunshine of your sympathy power to awaken on our lips strains that otherwise might never have found expression. Gone are those nights, like 'the snows of yester year,' but one charming thought clings round their memory and endows them with perpetual fragrance, the thought of your never-failing kindness. To this theatre, then, wherever my footsteps may wander, will revert my tenderest memories, and not only my tenderest memories, but also my business solicitude, for although I shall not be in the future its regular physical occupant, I am happy to say I still remain its regular lessee and manager. Thus, you see, I do not follow the adage that it is better to be off with the old love before you are on with the new; I believe in being on with both, and I shall treat them with equal fairness. The new love shall have most of my companionship, the old love most of my thoughts, and both all my devotion. Neither shall one have cause to be jealous of the other. What Stella and Vanessa were to Swift, my two loves shall be to me. Nor need the old love at this present separation fear permanent desertion. Let her console

herself, 'On revient toujours à ses premières amours.' Indeed, nothing precludes me from acting at both theatres every night except the absurd physical restrictions on human ubiquity which I should very much like to see abolished. And now, with my Rosemary for remembrance in one hand, let me pick up pansies for thoughts with the other. Thoughts move forward as well as back, and I am thinking that, though the goodwill that has attached to me here has been as much local as personal, I may reasonably hope that the personal part may not be withdrawn, even though the scene be shifted. If I have found the road to your hearts, if I still live there, it can matter little what house I occupy on that road. Twenty-three years of devoted service to you I ask to be credited to my account. As, on the railroad of life, I look out on the landscape of the past, I see those twenty-three years receding more and more swiftly, I think of the companions of my journey; I recall sadly the junctions where some got off to travel on other lines; and I think more sadly still of those who disembarked, never to travel on earthly road again. Then I turn with affection and hope towards those who remain. With them, with you, let me enter on the next stage of my journey. The train is one that cannot stand still; the guard one that cannot be denied. For my part, I mean, in the pursuit of my vocation, to travel as long as there's steam to travel with. But not a mile can I go without your consent. Give me that in the future as generously as you have in the past, and I shall jog along, wearing my Rosemary with invincible gaiety, knowing all the

sweetness and none of the bitterness that lies in that word—Remembrance."

The following is a speech delivered in the November of 1899 to the Society calling themselves "The Argonauts."

He said that when their kind invitation reached him, he wrote to his son—who lives in the Wild West of America—the news of the delicate compliment they intended paying him. In his congratulations the son asked his father to send him the history of the club. The letter only arrived a day or two ago, and he stood confronted with the remembrance that he was going to dine with them without having mastered the question in all its detail as to who and what they really were. All of them could doubtless claim direct descent from the original crew of the *Argo*. He had, therefore, in the last few days steeped himself in argonautical lore. Enterprising journals nowadays provided them with encyclopædias, dictionaries, and best books by the hundred. These productions taught them all they wanted to know, and a good deal they did not. They took their instructions in doses and tabloids, and, what was better, they could pay for it as well as assimilate it by instalments ; but it was not to such sources of information that he turned. He put that all on one side, and went to the fountain-head—to the Burke of the ancient gods, demigods, and heroes, the immortal work of Lempriere. In his chaste and artless pages—so dear to the youthful memory—he knew he should find the whole truth about their forefathers—the unadulterated,

unbowdlerised truth. He had already forgotten all about their relatives' little affairs. There should be nothing in what he said to bring the blush of shame to the cheek of consanguinity. To begin with, there was the good ship *Argo* herself, the first that ever sailed the main ; then she was manned by good men and true—taking them all round—in Jason and his companions. The Golden Fleece, too—the object of their quest—was a very good thing to get. “In fact,” he said, “I shrewdly suspect, though Lempriere is not explicit on the matter, that the *Argo* was a racing yacht, Jason the Sir Thomas Lipton of the day, and the Golden Fleece a prototype of the Silver Cup. But there was one point in Lempriere's history that struck me forcibly, significant as it was of that intimate union which evidently existed then as now between the Church and stage. Lempriere tells us that the crew was composed of representatives of the army, the navy, the legislature, and two out of the learned professions. At least, I learn that sons of Mars, Neptune, and Lycurgus were on board, whilst they had no less a person than *Æsculapius* as ship's doctor ; but true to the sailors' superstition, there was no clergyman, and so closely are the two always associated, there was no actor either. The only explanation I can suggest is the simple one that they never seemed to have entertained anyone but themselves. To-night you receive—and receive most hospitably and generously—a member of the theatrical profession. Whether your taste in this respect is better or worse than your fathers, whether you are degenerates or regenerates, I must ask others to decide. But there

was another omission from the crew of the *Argo* of far wider and greater import. Would you believe it? I could not, but Lempriere vouches for the fact that there was not a single woman on board. Surely, if you are true to the traditions of your blood, there really ought not to have been a lady here to-night, only a gathering of men. We know it is the sweet function of woman to remove by her sympathy the timidity which she first inspires by her beauty. So, you see, I take heart of grace, and already contemplate applying the legend to my own case. On you the responsibility. You suggested Lempriere; Lempriere suggested the legend, and the legend a parallel between the voyage of the *Argo* and my own venture. On Thursday I, like Jason, am about to launch a new ship. Like Jason, I am an adventurer on an unplumbed and unfathomable ocean. Mine is the ocean of popular opinion, an element that, whatever one's past experience may be, is always uncertain and unknown. Shallows on one coast, sunken rocks on another. To-day a dead calm, paralysing movement; to-morrow a hurricane snapping your mast. Yet with his trusty Argonauts to support him, Jason surmounted all obstacles and won his Golden Fleece. I, too, with this good company of Argonauts around me, will hope to win mine. But not with such enchanted herbs and noxious spells, such as Jason used to overcome the dragon that guarded his trophy, shall I try to drug that genial dragon, the British public. My means shall be legitimate. We are told that on the coast of Brittany the fishermen, at sunset, fancy they can hear, beneath the murmur of the waves, the silver

chimes of cathedral bells, submerged for centuries, and that this phantom music is very dear to their simple hearts. So do I hope that, in the course of my new managerial voyage, I may hearken to the pure and liquid chimes of that perennial romance which 'rules the present from the past'; and beneath the distracting tides of impulse and noisy agitation there may be always audible to me those eternal voices which, sounding in sympathetic ears, no clamour or turmoil of the fleeting moment can ever silence or subdue. By such means will I venture out to sea to win—may I say retain?—these golden opinions, which to me are the Golden Fleece in quest of which my course is set."

On a memorable afternoon, in the saloon of the Lyceum Theatre and in the presence of a number of actors, actresses, and others interested in the theatrical profession, Sir Henry Irving presented Charles Wyndham, on behalf of the Actors' Benevolent Fund, with an illuminated address of thanks for his magnificent gift of £2,452, being the proceeds of two testimonial performances by his brother managers and fellow-artists in commemoration of his twenty years' management of the Criterion Theatre. Sir Henry, in making the presentation, expressed the pleasure it gave him, remarking it was a happy result they were celebrating, and a happy episode in the life of any man. He almost regretted that the gathering had not been made a public one, for as Charles Wyndham by his splendid benevolence had drawn into one harmonious and grateful whole the feelings of the entire body of his comrades in art, so he

(Sir Henry) was sure that the public would have wished to testify to him by their presence their heartfelt appreciation of his charity and of his brotherly love.

Charles Wyndham, in reply, said: "I cannot tell you how highly I value this generous recognition on your part of what poor services I was enabled to render, by the hearty and loyal support and assistance of my brother and sister actors, to the fund, nor can I tell you how much that pleasure is increased when I find that the hand by which this touching and gracefully worded address is presented to me is that of my old friend of so many years; my fellow-worker from the days of our early manhood, at whose theatre half the celebration took place, and whose absence from England our knowledge of him tells us alone prevented his association at that, to me, most memorable occasion. My dear Sir Henry, proud and gratified though you and your committee have made me, without affectation I question whether I really deserve that which your generosity conceived, for every man is a debtor—a permanent debtor—to his profession or his trade, and just as the sea repays to the earth in mist and vapour what it has taken from it in rivers and streams, so when a man contributes to the resources of his calling he is only giving back in one form what he has taken from it in another. There is no merit, therefore, in any act like this. There is an obligation binding on us all alike, great or small, to be ever conscious of the operation in our profession of Nature's cruel ordinances, which deals out to one man success, and to another the bitter meed of disappointment. Whatever services I may have rendered

to the fund, therefore, I look upon only as a duty for the moment discharged, and for the moment over. This reflection, however, does not prevent me from accepting with affectionate gratitude this manifestation of your goodwill towards me, enshrined as it is, too, in a record which, believe me, as long as life lasts, will be treasured among my dearest collections."

Addressing the members of the Stock Exchange at that grim time when war was raging in South Africa, he said :—

"Gentlemen of the House,—In the nervousness incidental to a first appearance before a new audience, I am afraid my mode of addressing you is a little like the beginning of that sentence in the Queen's speech which delicately introduces the question of finance. Not inappropriately so after all, for it is on a question of finance that I am myself about to speak. I am going to appeal to this house with no less absolute confidence than the Queen appeals to hers—in aid of those brave fellows who, under African skies, are spending their force, and on African veldts are shedding their blood, and laying down their lives in the defence of the liberties of Englishmen. Though this is no Queen's speech, I am going to appeal for the homes of soldiers, without whose love and loyalty the Queen—so far as her just and righteous, but material power in the world is concerned—would be no Queen. To your great kindness in offering to make a special quotation for tickets on the inaugural night of my new theatre, you add the personal compliment of asking me to set the ball rolling. I will do so.

I will say to you—and in American parlance—I will say 'right here' that in that representation of *David Garrick* on the 16th you will not get anything like value for the large sums I see will be forthcoming. With the traditional generosity of your house dancing merrily in my brain, I am sure I need add no greater incentive. The less merit in the performance, the more merit in your bounty. Gentlemen, I ask you to make a market for those tickets. No one understands the operation better than yourselves. I ask you to manufacture a gigantic boom for the homes of our soldiers. Whilst war rages between bulls and Boers there will be no contest in such an operation as this between bulls and bears. There will be no bears in this case. There will, I hope, be a little rigging, but no commissions, contangos, or carry-overs. The securities, each duly and correctly numbered, will be taken up, and every one of them will be a gilt-edged security; gilt-edged in the enduring memory of a noble deed, by you well done. Gentlemen, the hammer is ready; the same, I believe, the other day declared the default of Mr. Kruger. Be you ready with your note-books and your cheque-books. The soldier knows his duty to be to his country, and we know ours to be to the home that soldier leaves behind him. He has loyally complied with his bargains. We cannot too liberally comply with ours. Thus you, he, and I will be knit together in one solid body of unswerving devotion to the flag that waves o'er us, the land that we love, and our lady the Queen."

On January 4th, 1902, the footlights were turned down for the last time at that time-honoured playhouse,

The Old Theatre Royal, Birmingham. To do honour to the occasion, Charles Wyndham brought his company from London, and, after a performance of *David Garrick*, thus addressed a crowded and deeply interested audience :—

“Ladies and gentlemen, the curtain has fallen for the last time in this building. In the first working hours of the first day in the working week these walls will begin to crumble beneath the labourer’s stroke. Each brick in them is instinct with its own proud memory, carrying hidden in its cells, burnt in with the sacred fire of genius, every shade of tone and colour that has played its fitful light upon these boards throughout that brilliant era, the Victorian age. Each rafter, at the touch of the magician’s wand, would ring out again with the passion of a Kemble, and a Siddons, and a Kean—the elocution of Macready, the laughter of a Nisbett, the gentle tenderness of a Faucit, the humour of a Harley, Farren’s dignity, Dundreary’s problems, and the art of all those who strove to keep the Drama’s torch alive. All these are passing now before us in stately procession, giving back ghostly echoes of the plaudits that greeted them in olden times ; plaudits from now vanished hands and lips that are silent. Well, though the Muse of this theatre, like other charming ladies, once changed her name in early life, though the poor thing was once burnt out of house and home and had to build another, the fact remains that on this spot she has lived and flourished since her birth on that distant day when the British realms were ruled by George III., and the British stage by David Garrick.

I do not propose to go into a detailed history of your theatre. That has had ample justice done to it by the fluent pen of your fellow-townsmen and ardent devotee to the drama, Edgar Pemberton, whose absence from our midst through ill health we all so much deplore. (*A voice*: May we send him a message? *Mr. Wyndham*: Yes.¹) Nor need we be sad and hug our memories too closely. That is the privilege of senility, whereas our Muse is in her prime. Though you and I will never meet again beneath this roof, we must remember that bricks and mortar are only the vesture of a playhouse. Its real life is in the spirit that animates it; its identity is its continued existence on the same site, graced by the same talents, inspired by the same ideas, decorated by the same traditions. Stone walls do not a prison make; still less do they make a theatre. Our Muse is not shuffling off this mortal coil. All she desires is to shuffle off an old garment. She is merely true to the instinct of her delightful sex, tiring of that old dress and crying for a new one—and her loving, doting mother, Mrs. Dornton, bows to her wish and prepares to deck her daughter out in costume up to date. In a few months you will see her exquisitely robed in all her satins and her silks; and if rumour speak the truth, with lovely flowers and ferns crowning the edifice of her lustrous tresses, which is my poetic way of describing what the architect in brutal prose

¹ This alluded to a little history of the theatre I had written for its manageress, Mrs. Dornton, and which she gave away as a souvenir of the evening. In the kindest of letters Charles Wyndham sent me the "message."

will call 'a garden on the roof.' But I must be wary. This new attraction, permission for which was granted me in London, and which has been a luxury for twenty years in America, is dependent upon your authorities. Until they have given their decision, I must not prophesy, lest, when I come back, you use my words against me. I must be very cautious. In fact, I must imitate the caution of that Scotch village, of which some of you may have heard, and more, I hope, have not, whose inhabitants, when they heard on an autumn Sunday their pastor prophesy the early extinction of the world, promptly countermanded their order for a winter stock of coals. Understand me, it was not that they were a close village ; it was not that they begrudged the, under the circumstances, unnecessary expense for coal, but that in their caution they feared that if the world should really come to an end, with that winter stock of coals on hand, the coals might be used against them. So, remember, I only foreshadow the possibility of this most desirable innovation, which may be presented to you on the opening night, when, if circumstances permit, I hope to be with you to congratulate you. Then, barring the new garb, all will be as it has been. In the skilful hands of Mrs. Dornton there will be preserved that genius of management that has characterised her reign and that of her late husband, and of the Mercer Simpsons before her, back to the days of the incomparable Yates. The new theatre will have only one formidable competitor—the record of the old—but we believe its future will rival its past, and that this day will be looked upon, not as the close of a career, but as

a stepping-stone to higher things, a new starting-point on that journey, which has been, and ever will be, onward and upward."

To the Members of the *O. P.* Club on October 13th, 1902, he said, alluding to his recent knighthood :—

"I am here in the proud position of your honoured guest, because I happen to be the individual in whose person the King has been pleased to dignify the theatrical profession. I am for the time being the figurehead of the good ship he has christened anew with the first drops of his christening wine ; but I know full well that it was the entire vessel, not the figurehead alone, that the gracious act was intended to exalt. I do not wish, therefore, to speak of myself, except, perhaps, to thank your chairman for his graceful and sympathetic reference to my career—those nine years of, managerially speaking, youthful exuberance, and subsequent seventeen years of, managerially speaking, middle-aged sobriety. Beyond this, I prefer to speak of the calling to which I have the honour to belong. I do not think that we actors will be taking ourselves too seriously if we regard the favours conferred upon the stage by Royal hands in the past seven years as having a very deep significance. The throne and the stage have in all periods of our history been united by a real bond. Each has owed much to the other. The drama has been the recording angel of the joys and sorrows, the triumphs and tragedies of our sovereigns ; writing large the story of their noble deeds, blotting out with its tears the annals of their mistakes. On the other hand, the

throne has supplied the stage with its noblest themes and characters. Again, if we turn from plays to players, we find the same close relations existing from all times ; Kings and actors have been knit together by that double tie which is of the essence of all true allegiance, generous protection on the one side, passionate loyalty on the other. Of our two great Queens, Elizabeth and Victoria, the one shielded the stage from the tyranny of the city magistrate and Puritan ; the other, when protection was no longer needed, by her personal encouragement and immediate presence, favoured and fostered all that was worthiest in the theatrical output of the Victorian Era. On the other hand, we find an unbroken record of faithful service to the throne on the part of the theatre. This bond, strong as it was, remained, until recent years, wholly without public expression, and the significance of the honours conferred lies in this, that their bestowal marks the first outward and open recognition by the Sovereign of the place the theatre holds in the national life. Now, however, the actor has at least officially become a member of the social order, and has been deemed worthy of an honoured status in public life. Estimate, then, you playgoers, the debt of gratitude we players owe to the two great factors in this evolution—the Queen, dead, but immortal ; the King, the greatest playgoer of you all, the primal authority in our world of art. But without the support of you playgoers, where are we ? We often read of actors ‘resting,’ but imagine the whole of the theatrical profession doomed by dearth of playgoers to perpetual rest—actors condemned to inaction, or, what is worse, to acting

to one another. Think what that would mean ! Mutual entertainment would beget mutual criticism, and that would be a pretty pass. I remember in my old days, by which I mean my young days, myself and a great friend of mine—and a great favourite of yours—competing for the same engagement at the hands of a provincial manager. Neither of us got it. It was given to a third party, a very inferior actor. You may laugh, but I remember my friend and myself converging quickly to the combined decision that if ever there was a man who failed either in form, feature, voice, bearing, intention, or distinction suitable to the part, that fellow was the man. Again, what would be the playgoer without the player ? They are wedded to one another as securely as that discontented married man felt who, tired of the nuptial fetters, cried out : ' There are two conditions in this world to shun if possible—death and marriage ; for death lasts so long, and marriage lasts for ever.' Yes, for ever and a day. I like that phrase, because it sounds like adding on a *matinée* to eternity. For ever and a day have you playgoers taken us players for better or for worse. We, on our side, are bound to honour and obey you ; you, on yours, to love and cherish us, and endow us with all your worldly goods. We ask no more. We expect no less. Mutually independent, then, as we are, let us be worthy of each other. One word more, and I have done. There are three great factors in public opinion, and a public man, if he would attain a really enduring place in the hearts of his fellows, must satisfy each of them—the monarchical, the aristocratic, and the democratic strands in that triple cord

which binds us all together. Ladies and gentlemen, I claim for myself this much, that I have as yet done nothing to forfeit the regard of the three factors to which I have referred."

At an Actors' Benevolent Fund meeting at which he presided he observed that in thinking over what he should say it occurred to him to ask for an account of the subscriptions during the existence of this fund, and he found to his sorrow that they were lower than in the eighties, though the deficiency had been partly met by dinners. The deficiency did not spring from the subscriptions of the rank and file, which were increasing, but from managerial defection; and he wondered whether it was not possible, by a little self-communing, followed by still more necessary self-sacrifices all round, to recover their position. When the fund was inaugurated two healthy policies were adopted: that each manager should contribute £100 annually, and that they should make no appeal for outside help. They had, unhappily, fallen from this high estate. The cause on the part of the managers was apathy. This apathy was not of heart, but of temperament. The qualities in actors which evoked those manifestations of emotion, that intense sensitiveness to the external and immediate, were the very qualities which did not readily respond to the demands of the abstract and the indefinite. Assuredly, there was no lack of warm hearts among them; many and many an actor would share his last sixpence with his friend; yet many an actor would hesitate to give much to supply, in some dim and distant future,

the possible wants of undesignated persons. The needs of the moment moved them more easily than the claims of abstract duty—a natural disposition, but one, for charity's sake, to be fought against and conquered. To justify managers contributing £100 each, in the face of an actor with £500 a year giving £2 2s., all managers would have to enjoy an income of £25,000 a year. He must tell them, in the strictest confidence, that all managers did not make £25,000 a year. But he wanted to return to those happy days when all managers annually contributed that hundred each ; and it could be done at once if the members of the fund would shame them into it by larger subscriptions ; when they went hand in hand together, they would be prosperous beyond their most sanguine hopes. They were all members of one family, and each was a debtor to his brother. Not alone to the more prosperous did he speak ; he spoke to all. The very backbone of the fund should be the little money from the many. As for outside help, he still clung to the belief that the more they relied upon themselves, the more they would advance than if they relied upon others. As an art, their calling stood well with the country. Let it be their care that it stood equally well as a profession. They were known to be self-respecting ; let them also be known as self-supporting.

And at a dinner given on behalf of the same charity, he said if any actor might properly preside at that dinner, he might not unfairly do so, having regard to his connection with the early history of the fund.

Having traced the origin and growth of the society, he said that they heard much of the prosperity that attended the votaries of the drama, but, alas! there were very few indeed who were even moderately free from trouble about the present and anxiety about the future; whilst beyond them were thousands that simply lived from hand to mouth. What wonder, then, that when from the lower ranks of these came the many cries for help, their resources began to fall below their needs? At the inception of the fund they had determined that no appeal should be made to outside help at any time. Independence was to be their cry, and its banner was waved above their heads for years till, recognising the awful position and sad necessity, Henry Irving, from the depths of a compassionate heart, deserted the Independents, and taking this chair, inaugurated this annual dinner. He confessed that if any class of the community was justified in appealing to outside support, the dramatic body might not unfairly do so. If they excepted the medical profession, there was none which more readily lent an ear to external calls than their own. It could hardly, therefore, be unbecoming in them—who by a free, lavish gift of their time, brain-labour, and money had so often materially assisted public charity—to invite the public to assist their own. In conclusion, he appealed to them to lend a hand to those who had succumbed in the fight of grim and deadly competition, over whose prostrate and trampled forms the legions of the successful thunder past in the insolence of triumph. They did not appeal to them as loafers and tramps, who had never

done any honest work, or made any provision for their derelicts. They appealed to them because, and only because, the needs grew faster than the fund. He trusted they would not withhold their gifts from those who might never have even had the chance of being provident.

On November 14th, 1902, at the Court Theatre, Liverpool, Sir Charles Wyndham, in response to the repeated calls of the audience, after the curtain had finally fallen on the play, was induced to make a short speech. He said : "There are very few of us who do not from time to time find themselves compelled to abandon a resolve, however advisable that resolve may appear to be. For instance, in view of the crusade on the part of the Press against speaking from the stage, I had resolved to listen to their behest and not speak to-day. Yet I find myself standing before you and talking. I liken my position to that of the bishop who, anxious about his lungs, consulted a physician, and was promptly warned to sojourn in the South of France. He declared it was impossible with his many duties, and that he had resolved to winter here. 'My lord,' said the physician, 'if you resolve to remain in England, in less than two months your lordship will be in heaven.' The bishop replied : 'You don't say so ; I will go to the South of France at once.'

"So do I abandon for the present my vows of silence in order to enjoy the warm and genial atmosphere of gratitude. Basking under that sun I beg, in the name of Miss Mary Moore, my company, and myself, to thank you for your most generous reception."

On April 18th, 1903, at a dinner given to eminent actors at the Eccentric Club, he spoke as follows:—

“I now approach the toast of the evening, ‘The health of our guests, and the prosperity of the profession of which they are such shining, burning lights.’ Now, I am sure you observe that my position has suddenly become an embarrassing one, if not Gilbertian, for, after all, I myself have something to do with the profession I am called upon to praise. In the first place, you know I am at least a manager; and in the second, those of my friends whose intimacy is not strong enough to justify the extremity of candour tell me I am an actor, too. If, then, I lavish praise and adulation on the stage, without reference to its representatives here to-night, I lay myself open to a charge of self-praise. On the other hand, if I limit my nice remarks to those representatives only, where do I come in? Don’t misunderstand me. I ask no favour. I have been well brought up. I was reared in that charming coterie of modest men the world call actor-managers; and I can assure you that, all rumours to the contrary notwithstanding, they—the actor-managers—are sometimes ready to efface themselves, are sometimes willing to forget their exalted station, and are even sometimes prepared to recognise without prejudice that they are mortal. That, however, is no reason why I should praise my brethren and ignore myself. Why should I leave myself out in the cold? Self-praise, I know, of course, is no recommendation, but self-refrigeration is decidedly unpleasant. The only way out of the dilemma I see is that you all kindly forget who and

what I am, and I forget myself. We shall get one step farther along the road to a pleasant understanding if we 'Eccentrics' forget our guests and talk about ourselves. Imagine that the 'Eccentric' in me, and not the actor, is speaking to you to-night. I wish our guests to see in me only one of 'the general playgoers.' A bilious author once spoke of 'that beast the general reader.' If we are to speak of that beast the general playgoer, let us utilise the words of the Rugby school-boy, and say—at any rate, he's a just beast. Moreover, a kind and gentle and patient beast—a tame and simple beast. And there is the essence of the character of this Club—simplicity. We are simple children here. Every 'Eccentric' whom I have the honour to represent to-night is gifted with a freshness of mind, a simplicity of interest, only achieved, as a rule, by that celebrated young person—the unsophisticated boy or the unemancipated girl. None of us, for instance, regards the play as the epilogue to the dinner or the prologue to the supper. None of us stalks to his stall in the middle of the act over prostrate and wounded toes. On the contrary, we are always in time for the Easter hymn. In fact, I commend to our guests—our noble selves—as ideal playgoers—the real pillars of the stage, and as 'Carrots' says, 'it is the likes of us that makes the likes of them.' So, ladies and gentlemen of the theatrical profession, welcome to the serene and soothing atmosphere of the Eccentric Club. Here, as in the beautiful valley of Bhong, you will find 'peace, peace, quiet and peace.' Whenever you are worried and harassed by the professional critic, or the crank, or

the State-appointed authority, or the self-appointed adviser, come to this Club. Here be ears receptive to the story of your woes—ample shirt-fronts on which to repose your weary heads and stricken hearts. In this simple-minded, whole-hearted community you will find nothing but admiration for your work, sympathy with your cares. No ‘buts,’ no ‘ifs,’ no faint praise. No thunder from Olympus will stun your ears, only honey from Hymettus to touch your lips, whilst incense from flower-decked altars salutes your nostrils; or if you crave for burnt-offerings, there is here to-night in this club many a bull and many a bear, and many a stag ready to immolate himself in your honour. For we love you all—we simple children—we cling to you. We will go with you up the stern mountain heights of the Ideal, or wander with you in lowly valleys of the Real. We will climb with you to the very snow-line of the classic, or dally with you in the warm—the sometimes too warm—atmosphere of the comic. We sit at your feet gratefully as you pour into our little hands all the fruits and flowers and riches of your art. Such simple children are we here crying for the light! What produces that light we care not. Whether the lightning flash of tragedy, the oil of unctuous comedy, or even the gas of the gagger. We are catholics, too, in our tastes, and without respect to persons. We sympathise, for instance, with the perplexity of Forbes Robertson, who to this day cannot reconcile the fact that the light that succeeds is the light that failed. We are ready to ‘come into the garden, Maud,’ and look for the unforeseen, or inhabit a desert island with Harry Irving, or

go to Italy in the summer with his distinguished father. We are ready to become German youths with Alexander, or share as willing captives in his well-won triumphs ; and didn't we even go down with Tree to Hades last year only to assist at his Resurrection this ? So, high priests and priestesses of your art, in the name of this Club I give you a hearty welcome. One and all of us desire to testify, first to the pleasure which one and all of you have given us many a time and oft in the exercise of your delightful art, and next to the added pleasure which you are giving us to-night as our honoured guests and comrades."

With one more example of his eloquence I shall bring this rather long chapter to a close. This is his speech given at a meeting of the Actors' Church Union on July 15th, 1904, when, responding to the Bishop of Rochester, he said :—

"My Lord,—When it was first suggested that I should speak at this present meeting, I expressed, as you are aware, a desire to shrink from the honour. For one thing, I felt myself somewhat unqualified for the rather delicate undertaking ; for another, I was apprehensive that my action might be misconstrued as a mere exaltation of that Ego, which we are told is so dear to the actor-manager's heart. Your lordship's kind letter, and that of the Secretary to the Actors' Church Union, the Rev. Donald Hole, allayed my apprehensions, and I felt that I could, and if I could I ought to accept your invitation, trusting that at this late stage of my career—when all that I can do I have done, and when in the

common order of things but a very few years of activity are left to me—I might escape the criticisms of the cynic.

“It is two years now since I became a member of the Actors’ Church Union, and I did so because, after a careful examination, I became convinced that it represented a genuine and generous endeavour on the part of many of the clergy to build a bridge across the gulf which for so long has separated Church from stage. From that distant time, when the 1,008 ponderous pages of Prynne’s *Histrio-Mastix* appeared, to the present day, when (in the Roman Catholic Church at least) a priest is forbidden to go to the theatre, even as a spectator, a division and antipathy between Church and stage have existed. A most unnatural hostility! the separation of a mother from her child. For, as we all know, religion both in classical and Christian times gave birth to the drama. This inveterate prejudice is now dying out, but, like all prejudices, dies hard and slowly. Depreciation is always more acceptable to imperfect human nature than appreciation. ‘Tout comprendre, c’est tout pardonner’; but how rare is the intellectual capacity, and how much rarer the moral determination enabling one to ‘understand everything’! Happily, our two professions may now say that we are at least learning to understand one another. The clergy are beginning to see that the theatrical profession has, like other callings, its special qualities, and the defects of those qualities; but that, on the whole, it is neither better nor worse than others; that, though resenting condescension or patronage, it responds rapidly and warmly to true

appreciation and sympathy. We, on the other hand, feel this Union has reminded us how the condition of the actor's life, when engaged, for instance, on provincial tours, with its constant changes of abode, Sunday travelling, and the like, are such as to make it difficult for him to know the clergyman as his friend in the sense in which the resident parishioner knows him, and we gratefully recognise that this organisation is an attempt to make an especial provision for an especial need. Its beneficial influence on the individual promises to be great ; socially, too, it has important uses. There are, for instance, many of us who find ourselves for six months at a time wanderers on the face of the earth (one of the onerous obligations of our calling), strangers in strange lands, their circle of acquaintance limited to the members of the company, who, as so often happens in other pursuits, may or may not be congenial ; how invaluable to these the opportunity of finding private friends in each town, ready and willing to appreciate the non-professional side of the artist's nature, and to get in touch with his inner life and thought ! The clergy are manifesting by this movement a sympathy with and an interest in our calling. You appeal to us. I voice the hearty response to that appeal which is forthcoming from every serious-minded man or woman of my profession. We are more than glad to meet you half-way in establishing a brotherhood between us. Many years ago, while travelling professionally in America, where distances from town to town are very great, involving journeys lasting from Sunday afternoons to Monday mornings, a leading lady of my company—happily still

adorning the London stage at various theatres—was accustomed on arrival to devote her mornings to early matins, depriving herself of the rest necessary to fit her for her evening's work. From town to town she bore letters of introduction to some liberal-minded clergyman. I once ventured to ask her whether she could not realise that, inasmuch as the essence of religion was to teach a faithful discharge of duty, she was conscientious in denying herself every Monday the rest which should have enabled her to give the best of her art in the evening to the public, who had a right to expect it. She expressed her regret, but maintained that her devotions must stand above all other considerations. Two day later, however, she told me that henceforth Mondays should be devoted to rest, giving as the reason for this change of attitude that she had mentioned my protest to her spiritual adviser, who had promptly replied, 'Mr. Wyndham is right; duty to your fellows is duty to God.'¹ I confess that I was surprised at such teaching from such a quarter, but that was twenty-one years ago, when the mists of night were between your lordship's brotherhood and mine, and when I was unable to see that this enlightened pastor was simply anticipating, as an individual, the very attitude which the Actors' Church Union a generation afterwards was destined to assume as a body. To-day, after these twenty-one years, the sun has mounted in the heavens, scattering in his royal progress the light of knowledge and the warmth of loving-kindness throughout the black

¹ I am in a position to know that this young actress was Miss Mary Rorke.

and cold valleys of prejudice. It is to you, my lord, and those associated with you, that we look, and we know we shall not look in vain, for the successful exercise of your self-imposed and noble efforts. This it is—this earnest desire to promote the brotherhood between the two communities so long estranged through mutual misunderstandings—not any intention on the part of either to patronise the other—which is the basis of the Actors' Church Union. Of this fact I am assured—indeed, were it not so I could not be here to-day. In your lordship's letter to me you were good enough to ask me for any word of suggestion as to what more can be done, or what avoided. I can only reply that your lordship is the architect of this bridge that is to unite us. You know so much better than I how to build. Our care and our delight it will be to help you in providing materials as sound as, thanks to you, the foundations are already solid."

I have spoken of my chapter as a rather long one, but I know it has been worth compiling, and I believe that it will prove good reading. I have called it "The Picture of the Mind," and surely these speeches show the character and aims of the man who delivered them—his constant desire to be of service to his fellow-creatures and to uphold the reputation and best interests of the profession he adorns.

CHAPTER XIV

VALEDICTORY

ALTHOUGH the voyage is at an end, there still remain some ropes to be rolled up, and other affairs to be adjusted before the little craft that I have endeavored to steer can be considered safely docked. If in the course of these pages I have shown those who only know Sir Charles Wyndham on the stage the real character of the man, his true love of his art, his ardent determination to excel in it, and his bountiful generosity to all who have commanded his sympathy, my object has been fulfilled. Firm though his will is, it is always kept well under control, and he has never allowed himself to miss a chance. In proof of this, I may narrate the following little anecdote.

In the days of long ago, before the Criterion management had been thought of, he was spending a holiday at Thames Ditton with his friend and fellow-actor, Edgar Bruce. They had planned a long and somewhat bold canoeing expedition with Arundel for their destination, and with the intention of proceeding thence to the sea. One day at Weybridge they left the Thames after an early lunch, working their way up a little tributary in order to reach a canal that would take them to the river

on which they were to paddle to Littlehampton. They started at one o'clock ; the stream was tortuous, often very narrow, and sometimes so shallow that they had to get out and push their canoes along the banks. They worked on till past eight o'clock, when they came to a mill, and, tired, hungry, and hot, they determined to halt there, land, and seek an inn to rest in until the morning. On inquiring where such an hostelry could be found, they were told that "there was a very good one at Weybridge." "But," they said, "we want one near here." "Well," was the astounding reply, "Weybridge is only two miles off."

And so it was. That deceptive little stream had led them in and out, right and left, round and round, but they had practically never left Weybridge. Disgusted, they walked back to the inn where they had eaten their midday meal, and there Charles Wyndham found a telegram which had been sent to him first to his London home, then to Thames Ditton, and thence to Weybridge in the hope of catching him at lunch. It contained an offer of an engagement to play Charles Surface at the Crystal Palace within four days. At once the canoe, and Arundel, and the sea went to the winds. The impulsive actor immediately set out for Sydenham, played Charles Surface, played the part again, and was offered that management of the Crystal Palace plays to which I have already alluded.

His capacity for work has always been enormous. He was the inventor of the "flying matinée," and became known as the Dick Turpin of the drama. Not long ago, in little more than a fortnight, he, Miss Mary

Moore, and the other members of his company played to crowded houses at consecutive matinées in no less than thirteen distant towns and cities—namely, Eastbourne, Portsmouth, Cardiff, Bristol, Cheltenham, Bradford, Harrogate, York, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Belfast, Dublin, and Chester. What would the old actors have thought of this ?

His kindness to young actors is unbounded, and many of them owe their success to his generous encouragement. On this subject my friend Jerrold Robertshaw has written me :—

“I was acting in Ben Greet’s Shakespearean and Old Comedy Company a few years ago on the West Pier, Brighton. I had never had the pleasure of meeting Sir Charles. One afternoon, during the performance of *Twelfth Night*, in which I was playing that well-known bad part, Duke Orsino, the love-sick gentleman, the word went the round of the company that ‘Sir Charles was in front.’ I was sorry, as Orsino was not one of my creditable exhibitions. During the same week I played Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing*. Miss Mary Moore accompanied Sir Charles this time. Of course, we all ‘played up,’ and, no doubt, overplayed prodigiously. Sir Charles at the time was on the lookout for people suitable for his production of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. I had been four years on the stage, and, so far, had not found a chance of appearing in London in any good part. Sir Charles again honoured us when I was playing Evelyn in *Money*. On Sunday morning he accosted me on the parade, congratulated me, and said he might have a part for me in his forthcoming pro-

duction. I think that was about the happiest moment of my life. He promised to write me and make an appointment. A month passed over, and I was slipping back into my provincial groove again, when I found myself in a fix. I was engaged to appear in *David Garrick* on the Brighton West Pier when, to my dismay, I found I could not procure a copy of the play for love or money. I wrote to Sir Charles and threw myself on his mercy. He took pity on me, sent for me, and most generously gave me his own manuscript and parts ; and so I took my company down to Brighton. To my horror, on the Wednesday matinée he appeared in front with Miss Moore and a party of friends. After the drunken scene he sent me his congratulations, and then departed to play the same part in London. On the following Monday, in response to a note, I again called upon him. He then said many kind things, gave me the part of De Guiche in *Cyrano*, and offered me what at that time seemed to me a munificent salary. In short, he treated me with the greatest consideration and courtesy, so, naturally, he is to me not only the best of actors, but the most benevolent of men. He has backed his opinion of me since by giving me the strongest recommendations to other actors.

“He has infinite tact, and knows how to draw the best work out of every member of his company ; and he never tries to overbalance a play by being selfish. I remember one little lesson he taught me in a few words. After rehearsing the second act of *Cyrano*, he drew me apart, and said, ‘Don’t *act* so much in that scene.’ I said I was afraid of letting it down. He

said, 'Oh, no! Your individuality is too strong for that.'

"I never forgot that lesson. You see, he contrived to attain his object, and made me confident and happy at the same time. Another time, he said, 'You are going to be very good in this part, but I want to make you perfect. Don't use any *gesture*.' It seems to me that this is the right method when one wants to get good work out of others. His speeches at the close of the performance on nearly every night of our provincial tour were a marvel to me. The way in which he clothed just the same ideas in a totally different dress night after night, without ever being at a loss for a word, and this after shedding tears in his death scene a few minutes before, was wonderful."

Few men, I think, would, at a very busy and anxious time, go so far out of the way to reassure a nervous young recruit and make his position in a strange atmosphere a pleasant one. Hundreds of actors could bear testimony to the same effect.

The following letter he once wrote to a friend shows how Sir Charles loves to look on the sunny side of things, and how quick he is to sympathise with all his fellow-creatures :—

"What an eccentric individual you are, collecting stories of life's disappointments! Well, anyway, your collection is bound to be voluminous. Wouldn't you employ your time to greater advantage by obtaining records of cases in which human hopes had not been disappointed? As, however, you wish me to contribute

to your museum (for it will grow to a museum if you persist in it), I give you what I think has been the keenest instance of blighted expectations in my life. I shall have to go back to the days of my early manhood. Before that happy period Fortune's pin-pricks operate upon a heart as resilient as indiarubber ; after it, through their frequency, upon a heart as hard as iron. In neither case do they cause a lasting puncture.

"It was on the 1st of January, 1863, a fateful day, upon which, by previous Presidential Proclamations, slavery was abolished for ever in the United States. Like most young Englishmen, I was a fervent abolitionist, and, whatever underlying personal considerations may have contributed to influence my actions, it was easy enough then to persuade myself that the sole and sufficient motive of my self-exile from the land of my birth was the laudable ambition to participate, in however humble a capacity, in the glorious crusade to vindicate the sacred Rights of Man. Youth is so easily convinced of the singleness of its aims. Anyway, there I was in the army. Well, in our mess service was a slave—a runaway slave from a neighbouring plantation. He was about twenty-eight years of age, a good-looking, intelligent, faithful, and willing servant—naturally a favourite with us. As the proclaimed date drew nearer, I began to wonder what he would do, and how he would feel when Emancipation Day arrived. To our chaffing questions he would answer nothing. He was never a man of many words, and some of my comrades suggested that he said nothing because he had nothing to say. I, however, interpreted his silence in a sense more worthy

of himself—more worthy of us. I was convinced that his emotion was too strong and deep to vent itself in vulgar speech. I pictured Freedom's first life-giving zephyrs stirring his heart-strings and awakening their long-frozen melodies. It was plain to me that he was blind to everything but the coming dawn of the Great Day—the day that was to turn him from a beast of burden to a free man, from a chattel to a personality. I fancied that the earliest stages of his transfiguration were already visible, and that the very thought of his nascent freedom had already endowed his eye with a profounder glance, his feet with a firmer tread, and his brow with a nobler presence. I grew profoundly interested in him, and watched him sympathetically day after day. To me his silence was eminently speaking. Who could possibly talk with such emotions overpowering him? It would only be when Freedom arrived that the long pent-up rivers of speech would burst their barriers and overflow in floods of gratitude to the President, and, incidentally perhaps to me, that President's faithful henchman. Meanwhile, he daily discharged his duties mechanically but faithfully, deaf to everything but the anticipated clatter of the shackles falling from his feet. Well, at last the Great Day arrived—as all great days will, and small ones too, if you only give them time. Liberty had dawned upon him that morning, and how would Sambo receive its earliest rays? I narrowly scanned his features. He was discharging his duties as usual, without a word of exultation, silent—always silent. He waited on me patiently; I waited impatiently on him. In good time, I thought to myself, it will come. The

exuberant charms of the goddess of Liberty were evidently too much for him all at once. Perhaps he was coyly murmuring to himself, in reply to her advances, 'This is so very sudden !' Perhaps the glare and inrush of the new light was blinding the eyes so long habituated to the gloom of servitude. I thought of the mournful 'Dead Heart' of the Drama (its far more mournful Dead Heads had at that time no meaning for us), I recalled the Bastille prisoners praying in the early moments of their liberty to be restored to their dungeons. I trembled for Sambo ; I even trembled for Freedom herself. At last somebody ejaculated, 'Well, Sambo, how do you feel ? What does it feel like to be an emancipated nigger ? Speak up, Sambo.' I hung on Sambo's lips. They opened slowly—not to shout a pæan of triumph, but only to grin. No thunder from that sable Olympus ! No head thrown back in pride ; no eye moistened with tears or inflamed with exultation ! He simply went on grinning. Sambo had nothing to record. In all your gruesome museum of blasted and mummified hopes can you find any experience which more positively and poignantly illustrates the destruction of Youth's high ideals by the disgusting crudity of facts ? A grim tragedy was being enacted, a war of Titanic forces was being waged in the world's theatre with nations for an audience ; thousands were lying in agony from wounds ; thousands stiff and cold ; thousands more were going to suffer in the next two years, and thousands more to die—for this man's sake—and Sambo only grinned vacantly on the first of January, eighteen hundred and sixty-three ! ”

The following little anecdote has been sent to me by a friend. I like to preserve it as it is whimsically illustrative of his unvaryingly urbane and courteous manner.

“Rather a characteristic and funny thing happened the other day at the Carlton Restaurant. Sir Charles was lunching with Sir Squire Bancroft, and a lady came up to him and greeted him as an old acquaintance, Sir Charles of course responding; but she soon saw, or thought she saw, that he did not know her, which was really the case. Whereupon she said: ‘I fear you do not remember me,’ which he of course very warmly denied. And then she tried to help him further by mentioning that her name was ‘Mrs. Baker,’ to which he gave the usual smiling assent, as though he were well aware of the fact, though in reality it conveyed nothing to him. She then departed and left him and Sir Squire to continue their lunch; but when they were leaving she approached him once again and said, ‘I am sure you do not know me, Sir Charles, but you remember our mutual friend, Mr.—, introduced us,’ naming an old friend whom Sir Charles knew very well. Sir Charles at once became more effusive than ever, and declared he remembered everything perfectly, which he did not, and, to crown the matter, introduced her to Sir Squire Bancroft as ‘Mrs. Taylor,’ being quite oblivious of the fact that only a short time before she had told him her name was ‘Baker.’”

And now my task is at an end, I can only hope my book may be read with as much interest as that with

which it has been written, and that some day it may prove a useful record for the stage historian.

I trust, moreover, I have said enough to prove to doubting actors that in the theatre some of us find, in the words of the poet Campbell—

- “The spell o’er hearts
Which only acting lends,
The youngest of the Sister Arts
Where all their beauty blends.
- “For ill can Poetry express
Full many a tone of thought sublime,
And Painting, mute and motionless,
Steals but a glance of time.
- “But by the mighty Actor brought,
Illusion’s perfect triumphs come;
Verse ceases to be airy thought
And sculpture to be dumb.”

THE END

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